

THE MCGILL DAILY

Volume 82, Number 13

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Place: The Leacock Council Room
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Leacock Building
McGill University

For further information,
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Council attacks Prince over general assembly plans

MICHAEL ROTTMAYER
& JAMES FORBES

McGill's Students' Society Council held a veritable inquisition against president Jason Prince during Thursday's meeting.

Prince was attacked by all sides of the council, mainly for his handling of the process leading towards a General Assembly of the Society.

The General Assembly would be a forum where all students could attend and vote to set policy for the Society. A number of councillors felt the General Assembly would diminish their abilities to act within the system as representatives.

No confidence in Prince

The council meeting culminated in a vote of no confidence in the president. The vote was taken in light of Prince's handling of the process leading up to a General Assembly, which many councillors

complained was too secretive.

"Council has no idea what's been going on with the General Assembly," said Greg Shron, architecture rep. "By going to the students the president has undermined the au-

thority of council," said Athletics rep James Stewart. "The president has violated the constitution and this is grounds for impeachment." A vote of non-confidence is simply a rebuke, and has no actual effect.

However, some students have expressed the sentiment that the vote is more of a reflection on the whole council.

A student at the meeting commented, "A vote of non-confidence in your president is a vote of non-confidence in the Students' Society."

The motion passed by a large majority.

Some assembly required

Council decided to resolve the General Assembly issue, originally set for October 8, by resetting the date to November 5 and sending the issue to a committee.

Councillors proposed the motion because of continuous fighting over the General Assembly workshops, designed to set the agenda for the assembly. As well, council-

lors felt the original date of October 8 was too soon for adequate input.

Before the committee was struck, many councillors slammed president Jason Prince for his work in organising the General Assembly and a few of them asked for an apology.

"I've worked with the president for a long time and I believe in his principles," said vp finance Susan Nickerson. "But the president actually impeded the General Assembly process."

Under the Students' Society constitution, a General Assembly may be held either on the written request of eight councillors, or after collecting a petition signed by 200 students, which Prince had been doing. A vote of council is not needed for a General Assembly to be held.

Several councillors thought Prince's proposed list of topics was not appropriate.

"We are here to unify the student body, not divide them," said senate/board rep Robert Valdmanis. "We are not here to debate divisive issues."

Law rep Christophe Sicking responded that there are lots of divisive issues that are important to students.

"I don't think we should be afraid of divisive issues," said Sicking. "Tuition fees are a divisive issue on this campus. Does that mean we shouldn't talk about it?"

"We have a responsibility to be open," added Sicking.

Yet another complaint was the use of the Students' Society logo on fliers promoting the Assembly.

"We've received propaganda with

the Students' Society logo on it," said senate/board rep Leslie Paromchuk. Only official Society activities are supposed to use the logo.

Space — the final frontier

Several Councillors asked questions about Walk Safe's now-famous telephone.

The phone was finally hooked up today, according to Clubs rep Edward Saad. But some Councillors wanted to know who to blame.

Former vp finance Lev Bukhman even showed up to ask if the fight over political and religious groups had delayed the connection of Walk Safe's phone. Vp internal Julie Dzerowicz said, "Yes."

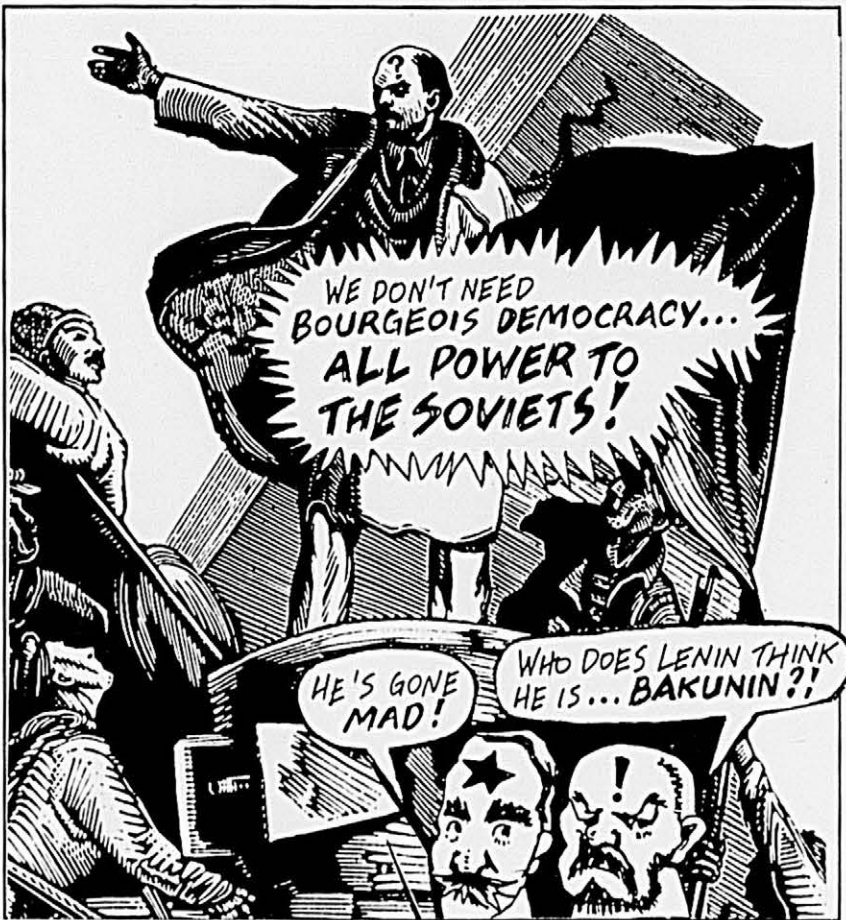
But she admitted that even without the fight, things were not going smoothly. "I didn't think space allocations would take so long," said Dzerowicz.

Dzerowicz added that it was not her responsibility to do the space allocation. Students' Society policy says that she is supposed to take the applications for space and refer them to a committee. The committee still has not received them.

And our student 'leaders' have still not decided how to define "political and religious groups". The terms are not defined anywhere in policy.

Vp finance Susan Nickerson said she thought the room assignments should go ahead and the political and religious issue could be decided later by yet another committee.

The Health Plan opt-out deadline is October 6. Contrary to some instructions, you are not required to give the number of your present health plan (that's confidential).



thority of council."

Kevin Brodt of engineering moved for a vote of non-confidence after Council found out that Prince had purchased an ad in the *Daily* and distributed leaflets explaining the General Assembly without first approving the expenditures through the proper channels.

"Just to whom this process is open I don't know, it is certainly

U of T Scholars for neo-conservative dollars

BY NICOLE NOLAN

Toronto (CUP) — The U of T Faculty of Law has been receiving grants from an American-based foundation that critics say uses its funds to buy academic research to further right-wing social policies in the U.S.

This year, the Law and Economics Program in the Faculty of Law at U of T will receive \$98 000 (US) from the New York based John M. Olin Foundation.

The Olin foundation has been accused of funding racist publications and neo-conservative research.

According to the Olin Foundation Annual Report, the purpose of the foundation is to provide support for projects that are intended to strengthen the economic political and cultural institutions upon which private enterprise is based.

James Piereson, executive director of Olin says the foundation does not donate to "destructive, totalitarian doctrines like Marxism."

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) rejected an Olin program in Law and Economics in 1985. The program would have required students on Olin fel-

lowships to take special new courses in Law and Economics and attend the John M. Olin symposium.

The UCLA curriculum committee said Olin was "taking advantage of students' financial need to indoctrinate them with a particular ideology," the US news-magazine *The Nation* reported.

The Olin Foundation funds Law and Economics, a discipline that examines the impact of law on economic behaviour, at a number of American universities; including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Stanford.

For the past three years the Olin grant has funded a number of Law and Economics initiatives at U of T, among them graduate and undergraduate fellowships and an annual visiting scholar in the field.

According to Michael Trebilcock, the principal investigator of the Olin grant, that aside from faculty salaries, Olin money funds most of U of T's Law and Economics program.

But critics say U of T should not be accepting money from the Olin Foundation, which they say uses its funds to reshape curriculum, and give scholarly legitimacy to ultra-conservative "Reaganite" social and economic policies.

Edward S. Herman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania

says that when universities take money from an organization with ideological biases, they undermine academic freedom.

"The purpose of Olin funding is to push conservative thinkers forward, to give them an extra little plus. Other thinkers can't get funding from Olin," said Herman. "The institutionalization of bias funding institutions like this can actually cause intellectuals to think 'If I put forward this certain idea or viewpoint, I can get big bucks'."

The direction of the Olin Foundation funding at universities came under public scrutiny two years ago when they were found to be financing a controversial US conservative student newspaper, the *Dartmouth Review*. The paper incited controversy when it published a quote from Adolf Hitler in its masthead.

The editors of the paper claimed the quote was sabotage. But President of Dartmouth College, James O. Freedman publicly criticized the *Dartmouth Review* saying the paper acted as an "instrument of intimidation" and citing as an example an incident in 1982 in which the paper had published an anti-affirmative action article in so-called "black English" entitled "Dis Sho Aint't No Jive Bro".

Since 1981, the Olin foundation

has paid or pledged \$295 000 to the *Dartmouth Review*, \$265 000 of which was put towards student legal expenses.

Trebilcock said he had been disturbed over the *Dartmouth Review* incident and had written to the foundation, asking them to explain their support.

"It seemed they had allowed the students to get out of control," said Trebilcock. "One of the problems of giving money with no strings attached is that people may go out and do things you don't find congenial."

However he denies that U of T is being influenced by its donors.

"You have to realize the Law and Economics program has been going on since 1976, the Olin Foundation has been funding it for only three years," Trebilcock said.

"The funding they give us is completely untied," he added. "The only thing they know is that I send them an annual report."

Osgoode Hall law professor Harry Glasbeek disagrees.

"I don't think they should be accepting this money," says Glasbeek. "These people (Olin) have a set of value judgements which are pronouncedly conservative and reactionary."

Glasbeek said the legitimacy of U

of T scholarship is undermined by Olin funding.

"We are full-time academic people, you obviously have value judgements. But it seems to go one step further if you take money from a private foundation which is openly peddling a particular set of views. Even if you held those views in the first place, if you accept funding from this sort of organization, it puts your objectivity at issue."

But while Faculty of Law Dean Robert Sharpe says he can't answer for every dollar of Olin money, he is confident that the way Olin funds are used at U of T will stand up to scrutiny.

"I hope that in the university community, people will judge scholarship on its merits," he said. "We wouldn't accept money that told us what to do. We feel that we should be judged on what we have done."

According to Herman, the actions of foundations like Olin are a vital link between academics and goings-on in the American political sphere. He says they have been pouring money into American universities since the 1970's, when American corporations began to become concerned over the growing power of labour unions in American politics.

THE MCGILL DAILY

comment

Sandbox Politics at Students' Society

The actions of councillors over the last two weeks seem more like a kindergarten fight in a sandbox than any approximation of democracy at McGill. While all councillors, presidents and v.p.'s are presumably capable of doing their jobs well, sometimes they make you wonder.

The problem is not so much performance - after all, we are students, hence we are learning. The problem is that we students are also responsible young adults, and often fail to act as such.

We come from different social backgrounds, economic levels, and ethnic backgrounds, with diverse political views. And sometimes this means conflict. While it is fine to disagree with someone on a personal level in private, it is a disaster to do so in council. The vote of non confidence against Jason Prince is case in point.

We are fond of levelling accusations against one another - Leftist, Faggot, Feminist freak, Conservative Fuck, Overloaded Basket of Sexist Testosterone, or whatever. While we may feel these things to be true, we must respect each other, especially in a council designed to govern a body of individuals that most likely includes some of these types. If that council is ever to be united, or accomplish anything useful, it is essential that people respect each other, and commit themselves to healthy dialogue rather than indulging in petty vendettas.

Jason Prince was elected by the student body of this university. While he may have made errors, these are certainly forgivable. This is especially true when one compares to some of the characters we've had in previous years, and they never even received votes of non confidence. No, the real issue here is that a good proportion of councillors don't like Prince, and his ideas.

Fine. But you are mandated to work with him, for better or worse. The last thing the students need is for the Society to fall apart.

So some of you would like it to run smoothly, with no hitches. Just like it has always done. Well, if it continues to move the way it has, the movement will continue to slide backwards into a deep pit of irrelevancy, where it functions only to you something to put on your CVs. Of course, this is just where the university wants it.

The fact that the administration accords no respect to you should say something. Vaunted references to authority and power and procedure mean nothing. Especially when coming from acclaimed councillors.

It is a shame that you excuse your unfortunate positions in terms of student apathy. If there is apathy, then it is your responsibility to fix it. You should go to the students - they shouldn't come to you. Most of them don't even know you are there.

Council does not exist as a place for you to perpetuate your agenda, nor is it a place to train you for further political escapades. It is a forum where policy for the students of McGill is to be formulated by you, for the student body.

Whatever you are upholding when you oppose setting in motion a plan to consult students, it is not a "democratic tradition."

Democracy isn't about convention and procedure, it is about doing your job. And your job is to represent people.

Talk about giving a certain faction of students too much power is just that, talk. If people are willing to work hard to change things, give them a chance. At least give them a chance to talk.

Until we learn to respect one another, and each other's differences, and grow up enough to avoid getting personally offended at the drop of a pin, nothing will ever get done. Nothing beyond the smug self satisfaction that a few people get in working very hard to achieve very little.

James Forbes

All readers are welcome to submit letters under 300 words. Add your name, program, year and telephone number. Anonymity can be provided; talk to an editor beforehand. Opinions can be expressed in the form of a Hyde Paek, no more than 500 words.



hyde park

TA Union? Jawohl!

Opinion by Matthew Pollard, Ph.D., Dept. of German

The following is a response to the September 23, 1992 "Hyde Park" column written by several graduate students in the department of Earth and Planetary Sciences concerning the formation of a TA union. I would like to comment on some of their remarks and address some of their criticisms.

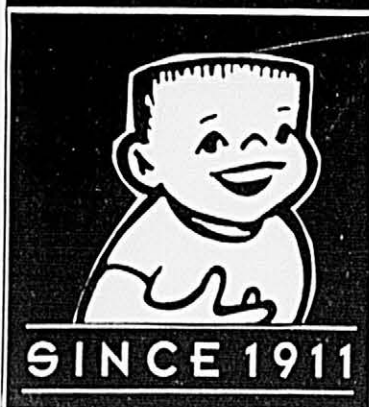
A TA union, that represents the interests of all graduate students employed in a teaching capacity at McGill, does not invoke the principles of greed, but rather of respect and solidarity. We do not quote Marx, you did, and the issue here is not some "discredited and unfashionable ideology", but the rights of all teaching assistants and demonstrators on campus to common job standards, fair wages, and improved work conditions. If you choose to classify these goals outlined above as "wonders", rather than as rights, then a union offers an opportunity to implement and formalize these changes. If you also believe not only that "greed is in" for the nineties but also that such a sentiment is the impetus for forming a union, I would suggest that the isolationist tribalism of contentment speaks this slogan much louder than any collective call for social justice on

campus. "Idealistic", as a term for describing your views, was not the first word that came to mind when I read your column.

We do not need to begin this campaign for certification with a series of misleading and conventionalized stereotypes about communism, picket lines, strikes, and bureaucracy. The "grass-roots popular support" for this enterprise is not lacking on campus, and neither is the potential for any and all teaching assistants and demonstrators to define the constitutional, legal, and administrative structure of your union. The formation of such an organization takes time and committee work, and I'm sure we would all be happy to occupy our time, as you say, with "the pursuit of happiness, hedonistic pleasures, wealth, and graduating degrees". Such lofty pursuits (certainly wealth) are rather difficult to enjoy with a monthly TA income of about \$340, which is \$340 less than an English teaching assistant doing equivalent amount of work.

My department simply has no say in my wages, and our working conditions are only partly under the control of individual depart-

ments; in no way does the amount of money allocated to the departmental budget for teaching assistants and demonstrators as fixed by the administration reflect the amount of work we do or the number of students we teach. In simple terms, underfunded departments, such as foreign languages, are required to do more with less, with the inevitable result that high productivity is demanded for lower wages. It is difficult for me to accept the statement that "TA problems in one department should have no bearing in [sic] requiring students at [sic] other non-related disciplines to walk out [sic] on their classes", if we, as different but equal colleagues in the hopefully enlightening project of imparting and gathering knowledge, are to give a damn about others working at this institution. Solidarity among departments does not automatically entail strikes and walkouts, but rather a collective basis for support that will empower us to negotiate and agreement for the benefit of the graduate teaching community. "What's in it for me" is not the question. "What's in it for us?" - namely we who bear a great responsibility for teaching undergraduates at this university - is a question asking for fair treatment for all of us. There are not other motives. Period.



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Wasteful is Distasteful

Recycling effort target residences, plan to expand across campus.

BY DEE HOYANO

Students at McGill residences will have to shape-up their trashing and consuming habits if a new campus recycling program is going to succeed.

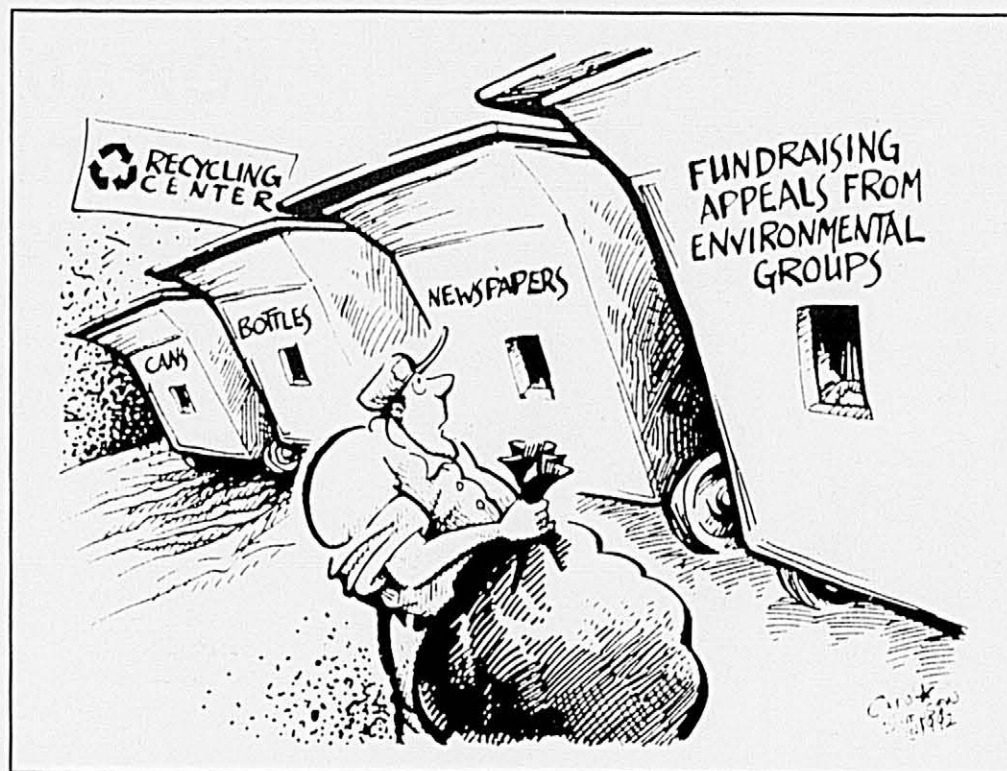
"Past recycling efforts at the residences have not been completely successful because of the unacceptable amounts of garbage found in recycling bins," said Claude Lehay, of the Waste Management Recycling Group (WMRG).

Currently, only Solin, Douglas and Molson halls have active recycling programs, due to resident interest.

The WMRG, a Building services committee, took over McGill's recycling program from Waste Management this summer. They hope to extend the service to virtually every building on campus, including the residences.

But this means students will have to pay more attention to their trash.

"Participation and conscientiousness are vital to the success of



this program," said Carmelo Spataro, of Building Services. "Everyone must be aware of what materials are recyclable and where

they may be deposited."

Glass recycling was also a problem in the past. Broken bottles thrown into recycling bins by stu-

dents posed a danger to custodians who separate the good glass from the broken for processing.

Recycling at the cafeterias has been on-going. Glass and plastic used in the cafeteria are being recycled as much as possible.

But McGill's recycling efforts are limited by the poor market for recyclable materials in Québec, said Lahey.

"McGill makes no money from its recycling efforts, but the cost of the program is fairly minimal," he

said. "The only way money might be saved by the university is if garbage is reduced to such an extent that dumping fees may be reduced."

In order to reduce garbage production, conservation programs are being adopted by a number of departments at McGill to reduce waste paper.

Paper makes up about 80 per cent of the garbage generated at McGill.

"Alternatives such as double-sided photocopies and E-Mail are being encouraged," said Spataro, "although no specific policy or regulations are in place."

Blue and black recycling bins are located in several campus buildings, although they are not highly visible. Many offices also have designated boxes for paper recycling.

Building Services will supply containers upon request, and they will be happy to provide extra containers and pick-up services for special events such as parties on campus. For info call 398-3776.

Closing the door to refugees

Protestors condemn proposed change to immigration act

BY KATHY BUNKA

About 100 Canadian citizens and prospective Canadian citizens marched along St. Urbain street Thursday, to protest a bill calling for a re-writing of the Immigration Act.

Bill C-86 is intended to "streamline" the refugee system. It will make it easier to expel people from Canada, and it will ban most appeals.

Opponents of the bill say it will deny some refugee claimants the right to a fair hearing, that it will give unreasonable powers to individual immigration officials.

Protest organizer Carolyn Maingo said the bill provided too little protection for the rights of refugees.

"If C-86 is passed, there will be no accountability, no lawyer, and no hearing," said Maingo.

"This new bill leaves too much discretion in the hands of immigration officials," she added.

If the bill becomes law, officials at border crossings will decide how it is interpreted in different situations.

One of the new provisions of Bill C-86 is that if people who claim to be refugees have stopped at another country along the way, they will be sent back to that country without having their claim heard.

"A senior immigration officer will be able to turn away people who fear persecution in their own country without even hearing what they have to say," said Sylvie Moreau, a coordinator of the Committee to aid refugees in Montréal.

and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms...the rights of all Canadians may be endangered," said Heap.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects anyone physically in Canada, including non-citizens.

Heap also objects to a clause which would allow immigration officers the right to refuse the claims of anyone suspected of committing a crime, or belonging to an organization responsible for criminal action, subversion or terrorism.

"Such a vague 'guilt by clairvoyance' or 'guilt by association' seems contrary to Canadian principles of justice," Heap added.

Most of the protestors were Canadian citizens.

"Refugees are afraid of what might happen if they are seen at a protest," said Moreau, a coordinator of the Committee to Aid Refugees in Montréal.

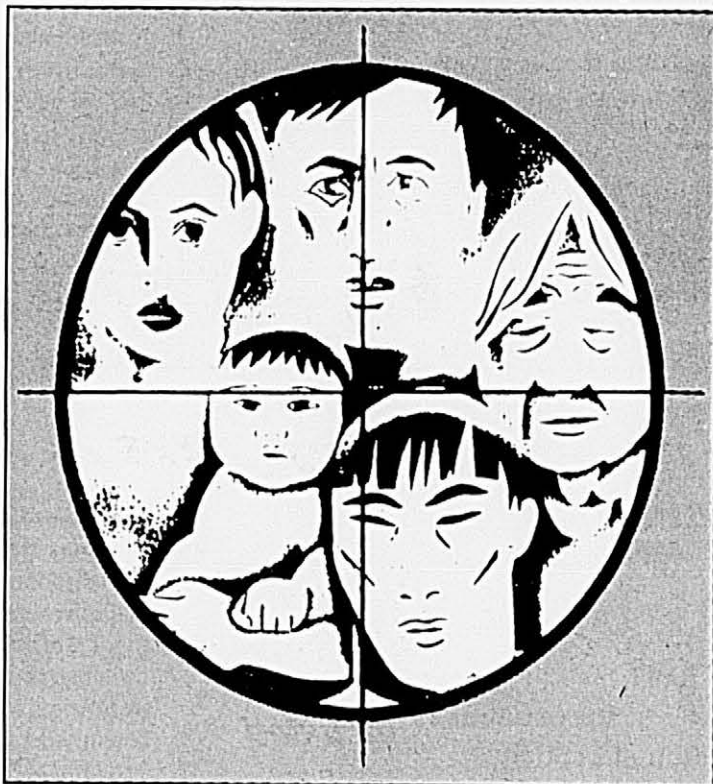
Heap also questions the rationale behind the legislation.

"Why restrict access to the system," writes Heap, "When the number of refugee claimants arriving at Canada's doors has declined between 1990 and 1992, and when Canada had fewer refugee claimants per capita than many other countries, why restrict access to the system?"

Refugees from many areas, including Latin America, Iran and Sri Lanka have no means of direct travel to Canada, wrote Dan Heap, New Democratic party immigration critic, in a pamphlet protesting the Bill.

Heap asserts that refusing such refugees a hearing would be a violation of United Nations law, which stipulates that anyone with a well-founded fear of persecution has the right to a hearing in front of a refugee board.

"At least five parts of C-86 seem to violate Canada's Constitution,



news short

Students of religion find McGill intolerant

Jewish students wanting to celebrate the high holidays are being forced to choose between religion and school thanks to a policy of intolerance at McGill.

"The university does not recognize the High Holidays at all," said Hillel president, Dan Koffler. "No memos were sent out to notify professors of possible absences, and with many profs unaware of the holiday, Jewish students caught between religion and school."

Participating in Rosh Hoshanna this weekend requires Jewish students to miss classes Monday.

But when some students asked for extensions on test and assignments due Monday, their request were either denied altogether, or they were told to complete the work either immediately before or after the holiday.

"Whether they move quizzes before or after it's the same thing," said Koffler. "We spend the whole weekend in the synagogue so even writing the test immediately after means you don't have the same amount of time to study as other students."

Some Jewish students approached professors individually, asking them to tape their classes on Monday. But most professors said they would only do it if the students provided a tape recorder and had the equipment set up.

Koffler said the disregard of High holidays applied to all religions, except Christian.

"The same thing happens at Ramadan," he said. "Muslim students must have a terrible time negotiating school around the fast."

"The situation of religious intolerance is typical for McGill," said Koffler. "Ever since the university was founded minority groups have had an impossible time of dealing with the administration and professors."

But unlike McGill, many Montréal Cégep's have policies for dealing with religious holidays. Vanier college has a written policy allowing students to miss class and make up missed work. Both Dawson and Marianopolis have unwritten policies, but Koffler said both are cooperative.

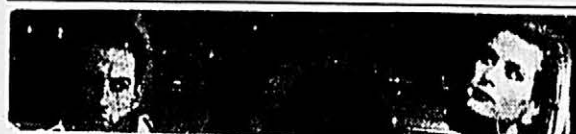
Hillel hopes to mobilize students of religion to pressure the dean of students to change his attitude.

"I can't wait to write this letter to Gopnick (the dean of students)," said Koffler. "His attitude is totally unacceptable for a supposedly multicultural institution like McGill."

The Hillel Steering Committee approached the dean of students about the possibility of introducing a policy for supporting students wishing to practice a religion.

According to Koffler, Gopnick informed them that there was no way they could. He said McGill has never had a religious holiday policy and never will.

— by Susan Vivian



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**events**

NDP McGill will be having a meeting today a 16:00h today in the Shat Bildung, room 435. Pseudo-pinkos all welcome.

Latin American Awareness Group Meets today at 17:00h in the T.J Hooker Precinct, room 302.

Arab Student's Association elections will be held today in the Ballroom of the Onion at 17:30h.

Student delegations to El Salvador from Concordia, McGill and UQAM will share their experiences and answer questions. Presented by the Latin American Awareness group and Culturefest in rooms 107/108 of the Onion at 18:30h.

Vision presents the film *Wisecracks* today at 19:30h in Burnside (Beautiful) Hall room 426. Free admission, free coffee and munchies. Call 844-2650 for more info and a menu.

Concordia University presents **Nicholas Delblanco** speaking on contemporary African fiction at 15:00 in room 131 of the Hall building, and again at 19:30 in the Library building, room 200, where he will be giving a reading from his most recent work "The Writer's Trade, and Other Stories".

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Professor Jerome H. Black, Chair
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Ads may be placed through the Daily business office, Room B-17, Union Building, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication.

McGill Students (with valid ID): \$3.50 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$2.50 per day. McGill Employees (with staff card) \$4.50 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$3.50 per day. All others: \$5.00 per day, or \$4.00 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. (Prices do not include applicable GST or PST). For more information, please visit our office in person or call 398-6790 - WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damage due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

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14 - Notices

WUSC-McGill's information sessions on Indonesian seminar. Thursday, Sept. 24th, 5:00, Rm. 435; Monday, Sept. 28th, 5:00, Rm. 413, Shalner Building. Application deadline: Oct. 15th. Info: 286-0714.

ST. MARTHA'S IN-THE-BASEMENT:

An informal, non-denominational Christian community meets every Sunday 10:30 a.m., basement United Theological College, 3521 University. 398-4104. Every one welcome.

15 - Volunteers

Faculty of Dentistry wants volunteers to participate in a preventive clinic course with second-year students. Female or male. Participants will receive a complete oral examination with a free cleaning. Must be available Sept. 28, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, or Oct. 5, 26 and Nov. 9 between 2:30-4:30 p.m. Call Christine Wooley ASAP at 426-3455.

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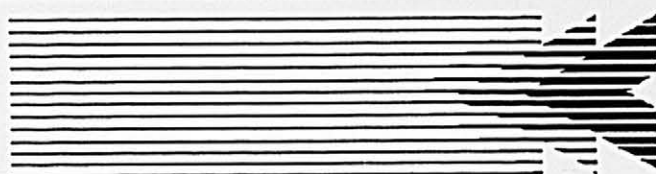
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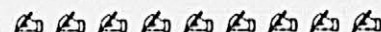
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GENERAL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

no. 9

To be held on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 1992 at 6 p.m. in the
Maces building lounge (McGill University) 3437 Peel,
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1W7



- 9.01 Opening of the meeting
 - rules of the assembly
 - voting rights
- 9.02 Reading and adoption of the agenda
- 9.03 Reading and adoption of the previous minutes
- 9.04 Follow-up of previous minutes and activity report
- 9.05 Nomination of chief returning officer
- 9.06 Annual Report
- 9.07 Allocation of surplus
- 9.08 Nomination of auditors
- 9.09 Amendments to the bylaws
 - Article 5.2
 - Article 6.1
 - Article 6.2
 - Article 6.8
 - Article 6.9
 - Article 11.2
- 9.10 Election of the board
- 9.11 Closing of the meeting

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CULTURE FEST 92

SEPT 28 ~ OCT 2

Culturefest The theory behind the practice

The current celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of European culture into the Americas, like no other event, focusses attention on the issue of cultural relativism and imperialism. In fact, the whole concept that Columbus 'discovered' the Americas has been undermined.

But while this has changed, Columbus' attitude towards the people he encountered on his journey is still shared by most of those in the West interacting with other cultures.

Columbus saw Native Americans in two ways. The first centred on sameness, with First Nations peoples being "of an excellent and acute understanding," needing only to adopt Christianity in order to become just like the Spanish.

The second view dehumanized First Nation's peoples, seeing them merely as objects to be traded. Columbus promised the king that the New World "would give them as much gold as they have need of, and in addition spices, cotton and mastic...and as many heathen slaves as their majesties may choose to demand."

This attitude towards other cultures remains in the present day. Religious paternalism has been replaced by economic paternalism — assuming that others are essentially the same, and need only to be shown the (capitalist) way to Truth.

Moreover, the perception of other peoples as objects has only superficially been replaced. Western liberal thought speaks of the need for allowing other cultures to regain their autonomy, but when non-western societies are forced to enter the global market, they do so only as "as many heathen slaves as their majesties may choose to demand."

Both of these views devalue the very concept of other cultures. Others are measured negatively against a supposedly neutral and objective western standard.

What is needed is a realization that the western rational-scientific mentality is simply one culture among many, and neither can, nor should be, the standard by which others are judged.

The attempt to relativize western culture — Columbus-bashing, for example — reflects "white angst," a self-flagellation on the part of the dominant culture which is neither based on a knowledge of self nor of other.

This attitude does little to change the existing social structures, and indeed it perpetuates existing power relations and notions of difference. White angst accomplishes one thing: it reduces the guilt burden of belonging to the dominant culture, maintaining an illusion of coexistence.

And extreme cultural relativism — where everyone and no one is correct — is all too easily reduced to nihilism. We need a clearer understanding of other cultures to overcome the fear and ignorance that causes ethnic division and violence.

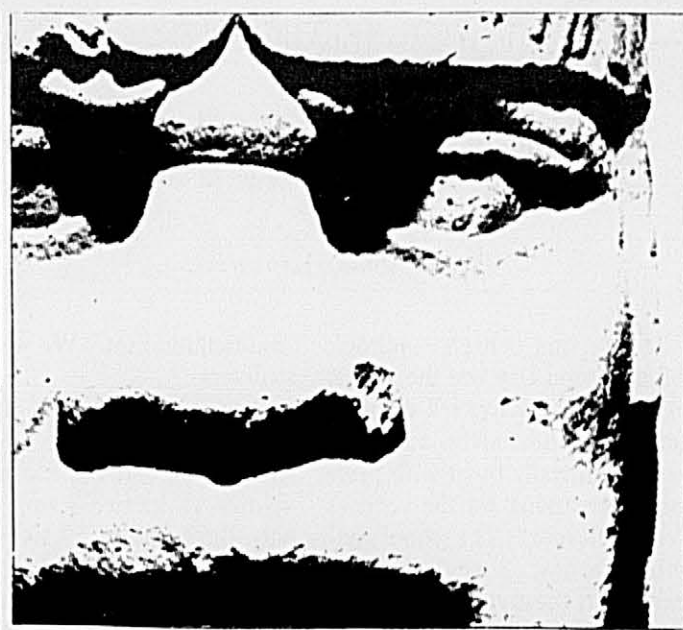
This week, we will attempt to correct, but not completely abandon, a singlesided and hierarchical discourse. We will try to challenge our confidence in describing reality on the basis of generalizations.

Culturefest is not a freak-show where the 'bizarre' activities of other cultures are displayed, reinforcing ethnic stereotypes. The issues addressed are by no means all-encompassing, but they give insights into issues debated in a range of different communities.

A cultural awareness week should stimulate an introspective examination of cultural and ideological baggage. The notions which have defined our social and cultural milieus are contingent, and are not any more 'real' than anyone else's. It should allow a complex interaction of peoples in an equal and dynamic dialogue.

Speak as loud as you can!

Mridu Chandra
Rob Heynen



T A B L E O F INSIDES

2

- Multicultural monster, in which Adrian Harewood engages in a Multicultural critique
- A serious look at cultures, in which David Austin talks about the way people look at Africa

3

- Veiled oppression and pointed fingers, in which Afra Jalabi discusses the politics of wearing a head scarf

4

- The Arab students' association, in which Bahaa Pennes talks unity
- A thought about peace, by Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese philosopher
- Heroines in Arab history, in which Rajaa Alkawaf sets the record straight about Arab women

5

- Tolerance and peace — a journey, in which Jonathan Glick goes to a lecture by Rabbi David Hartman
- Palestinian Manifesto, in which Palestinians say who they are.

6

- Tracing the steps of ancient travellers, in which David Austin tracks down Africans who visited the Americas two thousand years before Columbus

8

- South Asian Women's Centre — a refuge for immigrant women, in which Mridu Chandra talks to two women from the centre about their hopes and frustrations

9

- Rushdie's got style, in which Mridu Chandra discovers that the flamboyant author can write too

10

- Memories of Eurobabilon, in which B. Penner gets lost in the wonderful world of Eurodisney
- God, peace and democracy in El Salvador, in which Hugo de Bourgos and Hari Variantzas visit the parade of "El divino Salvador del Mundo."
- Believe this, in which cultures collide in weird and wonderful ways

11

- Fragmented identity, in which Paramita Banerjee talks about the immigrant experience in Canada
- Poems by Lester McDonald
- On being the different one, in which Emily McCarthy stands out in a crowd

Multicultural monster

BY ADRIAN HAREWOOD

At my high school, Multicultural Day was the annual exercise in collective self-delusion for many of the students and teachers who literally burst with pride when remarking on the school's "ethnic flavour". The school's administrators, ever eager to perpetuate the myth of the institution's self-proclaimed status as "international school", pranced around the exhibition room pompous and proud as peacocks, tasting a bit of "fou fou" from Nigeria, sipping some sorrel or ginger beer from Antigua and savouring the spicy samosas from India.

Later, everyone flocked to the auditorium to see the bongo drummers, the traditional folk dancers and to hear a robust rendition of a national song of some kind.

It was wonderful.

Everyone was enthralled by this cornucopia of culture in the room. Heck, one of the stodgiest old farts of the school, the "Theory of Knowledge" teacher — his ideas were decidedly anti-diluvian, a carded member of the National Rifle Association, he had supported Goldwater's Republicans in the 60s and was a subscriber to the arch conservative National Review, the magazine of Buchanan, Buckley and Duke — danced a little jig with a couple of my classmates whose parents were from Poland. It was corny, yes, but we were a "family". On that one day in the year the school had culture coming out of its ears. It truly was blissful.

People left the festival room revelling in the school's

"multiculturalism". We were just so diverse.

And it wasn't that we had any teachers from outside of North America or that the history and politics we learned wasn't decidedly Eurocentric in scope and approach. Our teachers had told us that we were multicultural and we were damned proud of it.

Indeed, the Principal echoed the feelings of his cohorts when he stated, "It's just so interesting being around people with different backgrounds and cultures. These exhibits are case in point, you just learn so much. You students should feel very privileged to be in this rich and diverse environment." The irony was that no one really knew each other at all.

Now don't get me wrong — this is not a Culturefest bashing piece. Events like Culturefest do have their place and evidently can be educational, however we must be very weary about being fooled by the system and accepting tokenism. We must take the idea of multiculturalism to a level other than a bunch of people jumping up and down and singing a song. This may be an aspect of culture but only a minute part.

What is to be watched out for, however, is a glossing over of differences between us rather than a genuine understanding of what makes me who I am. People can only start to truly celebrate difference once they come to terms with their deeply-rooted fear of it.

You see, many of you only like a certain type of culture in small

sanitized doses. Most of you are convinced that you will o.d. if you ingest too much. You don't like "culture" straight up — with all of its concomitant problems, frustrations and unfortunate realities so you add a bit of ice and soda to dilute it. I urge you to drink up — forget the rocks. I can guarantee that you will like it.

I suppose I have reached the stage where I am convinced and concerned that people are terrified of difference. They love seeing those hip advertisements with the United Colours of Benetton in which a cherubic young white girl is pictured with a devilish looking black boy. They just look so cute together.

It is those same people who are terrified when that sweet young boy turns 13 years of age and is walking towards them as a young black teenager on a downtown street.

In my dictionary Multicultural Day is spelled P-A-I-N R-E-L-I-E-F. At best it offers superficial healing. Bush's actions after the riots were the same kind of placebo medicine. As I see it, these events can be lethal for they can be exploited by dangerous people to create confusion and lull the masses to sleep.

I am tired of those individuals who use the veil of multiculturalism as a means of escaping from a serious dialogue about the issues.

I'm tired of people taking Tylenols in order to fall asleep. Now more than ever we need people who are in a conscious state. It is only those who will not see who are truly blind. Wake up. Educate yourself. I am tired, indeed my family is tired,



but we refuse to go to sleep for we will truly be destroyed if we do.

People hide behind the chimera of multiculturalism in order to prevent change. George Bush is one of those lovers of Multicultural Day because it makes him forget about things like: L.A. riots, Rodney King, Racism, Inner cities.

McGill Administrators love multicultural events like Culturefest because it gives the public the impression that McGill truly is a diverse community.

Yet if McGill can sponsor and support a multicultural week, why can't it get really multicultural, really radical and support a multicultural faculty, curriculum, academy. You love multicultural day because it allows you to conveniently and painlessly suppress that eternal bugaboo your fear about race.

I have had enough of these multiculturalism lovers/monsters. Do you see why this term is so dangerous. It is high time that we

speak in plain language.

If you couldn't tell already I am an African Canadian born to Antiguan and Barbadian parents.

Oh, you couldn't tell?

What are you afraid of then when I walk in front of you, or behind you. Why don't you believe men when I tell you that "isolated incidents" with the police are not isolated but are rather a sick pattern that has to be to be dealt with.

Why do I have to always have to convince you that I am not exaggerating? I am your classmate and your "friend" so why can't you tell me what you are afraid of. You see we have to talk because you are afraid of talking about these issues in front of my face. I know your type, you want to go see the bongo drummers and munch on some German wiener schnitzel at the multicultural show.

Maybe you should take a bite of another kind of multiculturalism. You might just find it tasty. It might just keep you awake. I urge you to try it.

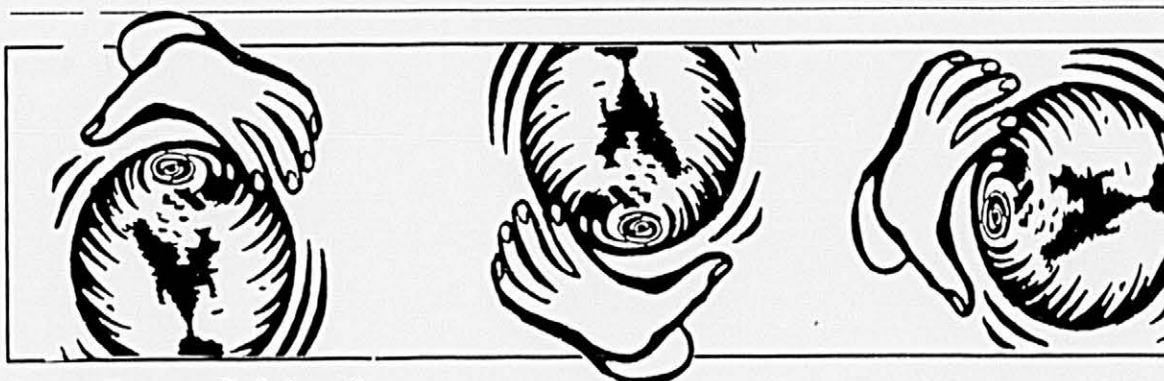
A serious look at cultures

BY DAVID AUSTIN

This year there has been a concerted effort on the part of the organisers of Culturefest to make the week-long set of activities more meaningful and relevant to the various peoples involved. Unlike last year, an attempt has been made to not only talk about the superficial things about cultures, but to also deal with pressing issues, such as Racism and the Legacy of Columbus.

Unlike last year, when Culturefest was called Fiesta, the Black Students' Network did not receive any telephone calls requesting someone who played the "Bongo drum" — a derogatory term used to describe what amounts to a variety of different African percussion instruments.

It seems that people are finally realizing that culture is far more than what some people would des-



ignate as "costumes," ethnic music, and folk tales. People are awakening to the fact that culture, history, and politics can not realistically be separated. Not if people seriously want to tackle the problems that result when a multicultural society does not recognize all of its multiple cultures.

At a recent visit to England a friend took me to a place just outside London called Aklowa. In one of the Ghanaian languages Aklowa means village and that is precisely what this was. Aklowa is a recrea-

tion of a traditional African, in this case a Ghanaian village.

The host asked some important — to some, perhaps amusing questions about the terminology used to describe aspects of traditional African life.

"Why is it that when a European builds a house made of mud and wood it is called a cottage or thatched house but when one is found in an African village it's called a hut," he asked.

"Why are very powerful men that

often control vast territories in Africa called chiefs yet the equivalent in Europe and elsewhere is called a king?"

He could have also asked why African art is still being called "primitive" despite the fact that it entails some very complex esoteric and cosmological concepts and has had a profound influence on the art of Europe — Picasso and the like. Or he could have asked why when differences between ethnic groups in Africa results in violence it is

called tribal warfare yet in Yugoslavia it is called ethnic or interethnic warfare.

The point here is not to state that I would like to see these type of disputes elevated from the status of violence to warfare. The point is that the distinctions in terminology used when describing Africa and its peoples are not a mere matter of semantics. It elevates the value of European societies while diminishing the value and worth of African societies.

If people are serious about solving the racial and social problems that are pervasive here in Canada and the West in general, it is about time that careful thought is given to the relationship between language, terminology, and perception of others. But as always, the question remains.

Who is serious?

Veiled oppression and Pointed fingers

by
Afra Jalabi

Four years ago I came to Canada from the Middle East to attend McGill. I moved in with a Canadian woman who called herself a strong feminist. I also identify with feminism, and I was happy to live with a woman who was concerned about such issues.



But things did not go too well. Although we got along, she was offended by my way of dressing. In particular, she objected to the scarf I wear over my hair. She wanted me to comply to Western standards of dressing. For her the problem was clear: I was afraid to show my body.

This argument shocked me because all my life I had considered veiling the harder choice. When veiled, a woman can not use her body as an advantage. I also learned that as women we should resist the sexualization of our bodies and instead develop our intellectual capacities. I learned to be seen through my intellectual personal capacities and not my looks.

She did not consider my arguments valid because they came from a Muslim woman. She replied that if Muslim men dressed like Muslim women she could accept it. My answer to that was that if her fellow men wore lipstick, high heels, and mini skirts then I too could accept the difference.

Later, she decided that she did not want me there any longer, because I was a threat to her image as a feminist.

Western stereotypes of Muslim women

Iwondered why the differences between Western men and women were acceptable to her, but not those between Muslim men and women. She seemed to have the idea that Western women had gone through some kind of enlightenment, and it was now their business to help Muslim women become "liberated". It is sad that many women in the West do not realize that their status is not better

than that of other women, and that their superior position only comes from the domination of the Western patriarchy over other patriarchies.

When I started looking for another apartment, I asked if my veil was offensive. Here, in a supposedly "liberal" society I was in the position of having to gain approval on my style of clothing.

But the issue ran deeper. I had been oppressed by a Western "feminist" whose main purpose was to remove oppression from women's lives. She felt no solidarity with me or with women like me. She could not identify with our struggle.

From my own experience and the experience of other Muslim women, I realized how rigid and stereotypical Western ideas about Muslim women are. We are differentiated from Western women, and considered inferior. Many Western women believe they have the most liberated status in the world as women. Such women equate Westernization with modernity and liberation. Non-Western peoples' cultural practices, no matter how symbolic and harmless, are seen as oppressive elements which must be replaced with Western alternatives.

Veiling is one of the most obvious problematic and symbolic practices that is politicized by the West. Many people draw spurious causal links between veiling and oppression. If a woman is veiled, she is certainly naive, dependent and oppressed. The fact that a woman is working or getting her education in a foreign country is overlooked — if she is veiled, she is "oppressed."

Ironically, many Muslim women have the same belief that Muslim women enjoy the best status in the world. As women, they are not exploited sexually, they are not used as advertisement ploys, they

have had marriage and divorce rights for centuries, and they do not lose their names when they marry. Moreover, women in Islam have the right to refuse their mother role and household tasks for which they either will be paid or receive hired help. In addition, women in Islam have had the right to pre-condition their marriage on any aspects they choose.

The themes most frequently discussed to represent Muslim women are total veiling and clitoridectomy (female circumcision), sensitive and horrifying issues not only to Western viewers but also to Muslim women themselves.

Unfortunately, the practices selected to represent "insightful" accounts into the lives of Muslim women are also spurious and unrepresentative of the lives and concerns of women in Islamic countries. The main emphasis placed on these exotic and very limited practices divert the attention of many women from their common struggle and their common goals. It keeps women in different societies from recognizing the potential in the diversity of approaches for resisting the constraints on their lives.

By becoming preoccupied with minor symbolic issues, looking only at the surface of society and its symbolic expression, we are blinded to many common issues.

Limits in all societies

When Muslim women choose to veil, they have the right to do so, and it has to be respected as an option chosen to neutralize their sexuality. This option is just as valid as other women's choice to expose their sexuality. Both cases are expressions of female identity.

Both approaches can be symbolic of

freedom and independence, as well as of oppression. Both these options can be oppressive if they are enforced on women formally. For example, veiling is not intrinsically oppressive. It is a contextual symbol and has been used for variety of reasons at different times.

Likewise, Western standards of dressing are not intrinsically liberating and emancipating. Some Islamic countries enforced legal unveiling as a measure of modernizing their "traditional" societies. This shows how unveiling is perceived to be intrinsically liberating even when it is done coercively by the state.

The Western media did not give any attention on compulsory unveiling as they did with compulsory veiling, because for them Western standards are essentially liberating. The point here to be considered is women's choices and freedom to select the ways in which they want to represent themselves. The similarities present in both contexts are usually overlooked. It is culturally determined values and judgements that took the lead in representing and portraying what was happening to women.

Many Western women will argue that even when the state is not involved, veiling is oppressive because women fall under the dominant values of society. But these women forget that any society has codes of modesty and dressing. Western women can't go around topless, for example.

We must keep in mind that all societies have limits, and all people who live in them are free to the extent of being able to use the available choices.

Of course, we always break the lines but also have to know the benefits and costs. Is it really worth breaking some symbolic practices rather than reworking the roles and meaning behind them? That is what modern Muslim women are doing when they re-veil. Their struggle should be seen more in the economic, political and legal spheres, rather than in light of culturally specific practices and symbolic institutions.

The problems facing Western and Muslim women are similar, no matter how different they appear on the surface. But cultural hegemony overrides these common grounds. Consequently both societies compare their ideals to the actual practices in the other society. Both Muslims and Westerners point their finger at the others' faults without realizing that a similar finger is pointed at them.



The Arab Students' Association

BY BAHAA SUNALLAH

Welcome to McGill.

Welcome to all those of you who want to hear and learn about Unity. About how to talk and understand. Most important of all is how to compromise.

Compromise. It's a big concept. We never mean to say that people should compromise their beliefs and rights so they can enjoy a decent living. Nor do we mean to say

that people should let go of valuable dreams and ambitions for the sake of others. Compromise grows out of talking to, understanding, and respecting one another.

Our concept of compromise is summarized by giving to the spirit of the group, and not giving up to the interest of individuals. The group is what really matters, and that is how united nations make a difference.

At McGill, this is what we keep in mind when we work, because we work for a cause. The Arabs, being

a minority, need to collaborate to present their respected culture, tradition, and to enjoy their rights and values as human beings.

The McGill Arab Students' Association is now a place for those who are interested in diplomacy and co-operation. Yes, it is true. Regardless of how diverse the Arabic mentality on campus is, the whole community is standing behind one body. This is the body that represents the Arabs. This is the body that is taking charge this year to keep the faith, and strengthen the ties with the students on and off

campus.

The Arab Students' Association (ASA), is a cultural and an educational society where the main objective is to expose our values to the McGill community in order to establish closer ties with other Canadian and ethnic atmospheres. At the ASA, entertainment takes a part in our communications with our members.

We like to perceive the ASA as a society from the community, to the community, and by the community.

The executives of this year as well as the members are longing to see the new faces. We would like to see you today, Monday September 28, '92. We will be in the Union Ball Room 17h30.

"A Thought About Peace"

BY KHALIL GIBRAN,

A LEBANESE PHILOSOPHER

The tempest calmed after bending the branches of the trees and leaning heavily upon the grain in the field. The stars appeared as broken remnants of the lightning, but now silence prevailed over all, as if Nature's war had never been fought.

At that hour a young woman entered her chamber and knelt by her bed sobbing bitterly. Her heart flamed with agony but she could finally open lips and say, "Oh Lord, bring him home safely to me. I have exhausted my tears and can offer no more, oh Lord, full of love and mercy. My patience is drained and calamity is seeking possession of my heart. Save him, oh Lord, from the iron paws of War; deliver him from such unmerciful Death, for he is weak, governed by the strong. Oh Lord, save my beloved, who is thine own son, from the foe, who is thy foe. Keep him from the forced pathway to death's door; let him see me, or come and take me to him."

Quietly a young man entered. His head was wrapped in bandage soaked with escaping life.

He approached her with a greeting of tears and laughter, then took her hand and placed against it his flaming lips. And with a voice which bespoke past sorrow, and joy of union, and uncertainty of her reac-

tion, he said, "Fear me not, for I am the object of your plea. Be glad, for Peace has carried me back safely to you, and humanity has restored what greed essayed to take from us. Be not sad, but smile, my beloved. Do not express bewilderment, for Love has power that dispels Death; charm that conquers the enemy. I am your one. Think of me not a spectre emerging from the House of Death to visit you Home of Beauty."

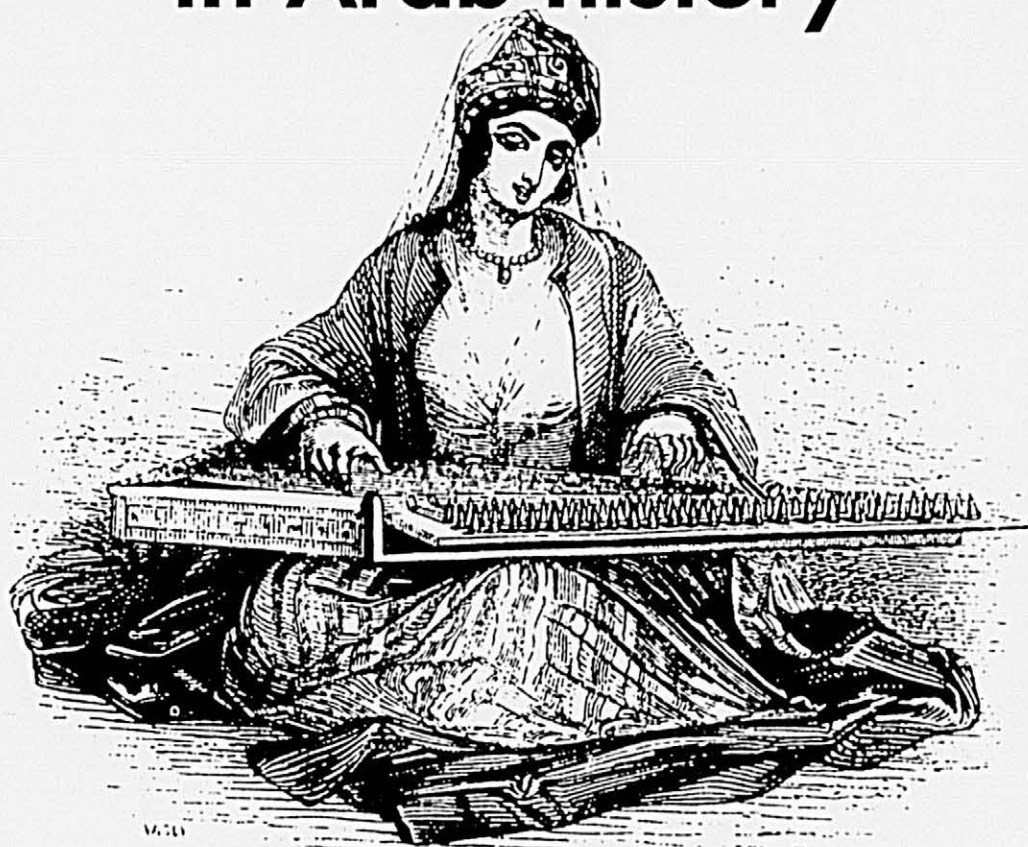
"Do not be frightened, for I am now Truth, spared from swords and fire to reveal to the people the triumph of Love over War. I am Word uttering introduction to the play of happiness and peace."

Then the young man became speechless and his tears spoke the language of the heart; and the angels of Joy hovered about that dwelling, and the two hearts restored the singleness which had been taken from them.

At dawn the two stood in the middle of the field, contemplating the beauty of Nature injured by the tempest. After a deep and comforting silence, the soldier look to the east and said to his sweetheart, "Look at the Darkness, giving birth to the Sun."

—Submitted by the Lebanese Students' Society

There are also heroines in Arab history



BY RAJAA ALKAWAF

It has been customary for literature to relate heroism to men and to forget mentioning the achievements of women in history. Women have played a huge role in history, a role that is often forgotten.

A good example of this is Fatima Bint Ahmed Ibn Yahya who used to advise her husband, an Imam, on legal matters that puzzled him. When he would give a precise explanation, his students would tell him that the source of the information must have been his wife.

Another Heroine in the Arab history would

certainly be Al-Khansaa. Her talent for poetry was so great that she received the title of 'best female poet that ever existed and would ever exist in the future'.

Last but not least is a woman by the name of Umm-Omaaraa who participated in the battles of the early Islamic period. Her support, both medical and physical, resulted in her losing an arm, as well as suffering other wounds.

The list of women remains long and history cannot be told in a few words. But the knowledge of them is there for those who are eager to know.

Palestinian Manifesto

Peace and Tolerance - A Journey

BY JONATHAN GLICK

You don't get more pious by hating more Jews.... Piety comes from more learning, more listening, more tolerance, laughter and hard work." What was Rabbi David Hartman trying to tell the Jews of Montréal Tuesday night? And why was he saying it now?

Hartman was appearing at the Sha'ar Shomayim synagogue in Westmount, as part of a series of lectures endowed by mega-philanthropist Edward Bronfman. The synagogue—that-Seagram's-built was packed to the oaken rafters—a condition usually reserved for the High Holidays—as Montréal Jews, who fondly remembered the rabbi from his days at the Bailey Street synagogue, came out to see an old friend.

But while his style was friendly, his tone was gently castigating, reminding the audience that Judaism needs to open its doors to those (Jews and non-Jews) it has kept on the outside. That isn't something at which the Montréal Jewish community has particularly excelled.

"Judaism is an inter-generational discussion," Hartman insisted, adding that while the community must be maintained, it must be apprecia-

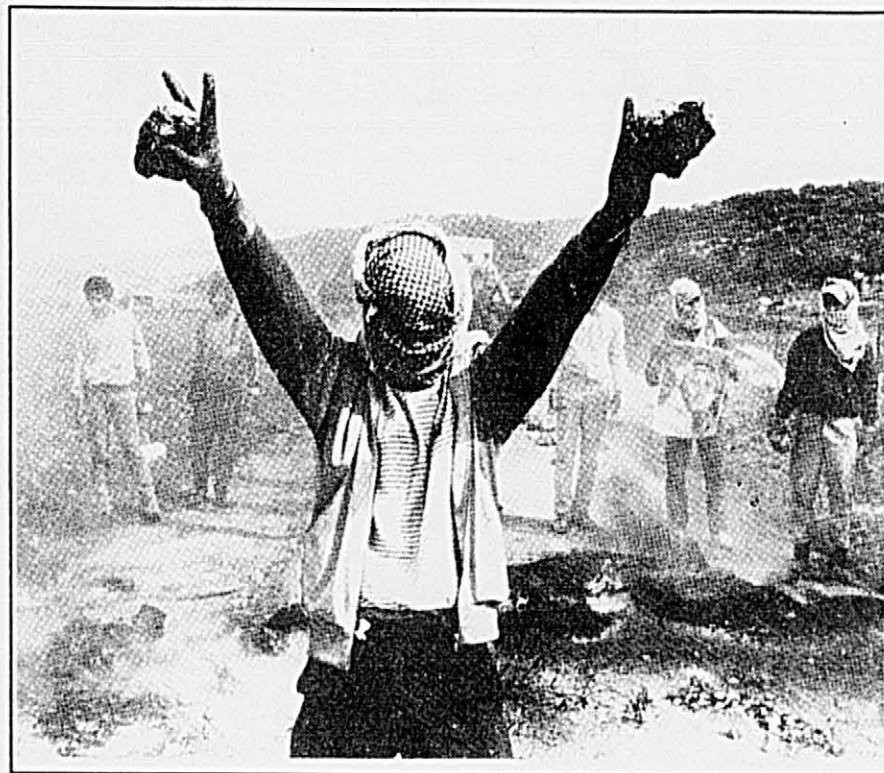
tive of those seeking change, whether religiously, as with the growing Jewish women's movement, or politically, like Israeli peaceniks.

Hartman should know. In Israel, where he now lives, he has been at the forefront of both of these trends, leading *Mifletet Meimad*, an orthodox party for peace, civil rights and religious pluralism in the 1988 Elections.

Hartman, who meets regularly with Palestinian doves like Sari Nusseibeh, was sober about the prospects of peace. But he insisted that the "long, arduous journey" towards safety and sanity would be worth it. For the Jews and Israel, he said, "the show hasn't even begun."

He was saying it now, because the journey has started, and no matter how nervous and excited we as Jews are, we are at the first of many way-stations. Thinkers like Rabbi David Hartman are calmly pointing the way.

Jonathan Glick is chairperson of the Progressive Zionist Caucus. For info on the group or on Jewish/Zionist progressive type activities, call 843-0591.



Palestinian Demonstration, West Bank

BY HASSEN ALI

We are the Palestinian People, there are 5.5 million of us. One million live on the West Bank of the River Jordan, sixteen hundred and fifty live in Israel. The rest of us are scattered around the world. We are a nation robbed of its country, stripped of its rights. In the West Bank and Gaza strip, we live under Israeli military occupation. In Israel, we live as second class citizens. In the Arab countries bordering Israel, we live in refugee camps that make the slums of the Western world seen like affluent neighborhoods.

It wasn't always this way. We once had our homes and gardens, farms and factories. They belonged to our parents and their ancestors before them. They stretched from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, a Levantine homeland that we and the rest of the world call Palestine.

We had among us a handful of Jews with whom we lived in peace and harmony, while the sweeping majority of Jewish people suffered unimaginable atrocity at the hands of Anti-Semitic forces worldwide, that finally culminated in the Nazi Holocaust.

This genocide added urgency to the Zionist call for a Jewish state and it gained the support of a shocked, and shamed world. The Jewish state that the movement wanted, and the one that they were given was in Palestine, a land without a people for a people without a land.

Overnight, we were transferred into a non-people. Our country,

held in trust by the British mandate, somehow became an uninhabited piece of real estate that the British authorities felt free to give away.

The thousands of Jewish immigrants that would arrive during the following decades would eventually force us into neighboring countries, and crowd us into the territories at the Eastern and Southern fringes of what was Palestine.

In 1948, our homes and gardens, farms and factories became theirs, and they called it Israel.

The intifada is our belated realization that neither Israel or its supporters have the slightest intention of according us the basic rights and dignity of Humanity. It is our decision to live free or die trying. It is a message from us to Israel and to the United States and the rest of the world. We will no longer be a subject people.

If you order us to disperse we will assemble, shoot us if you will. If you confine us to camps, we will roam the countryside. Dig up our soil and bury us in it if you will.

If you direct us to work in your factories, we will confine ourselves to our homes. Herd us into your concentration camps if you will.

If you instruct us to by your products and produce, we will make and grow our own. Destroy our houses and gardens if you will.

If you demand taxes we will give nothing, lob tear gas into our huts if you will.

If you rule that we must carry identity cards, we will carry Palestinian flags. Cut off our water supply and starve us if you will.

Whatever law you pass we will break, whatever demand you make we will ignore, whatever action you forbid we will undertake. Bring out your clubs and steel pipes if you will.

When one of us falls, ten will take their place.

Drang ten of us to jail, and you will find one hundred waiting for you when we return. Break twenty arms, and a town full of healthy arms will shower stones around you.

When your bullets make us childless, we will adopt the children you have orphaned.

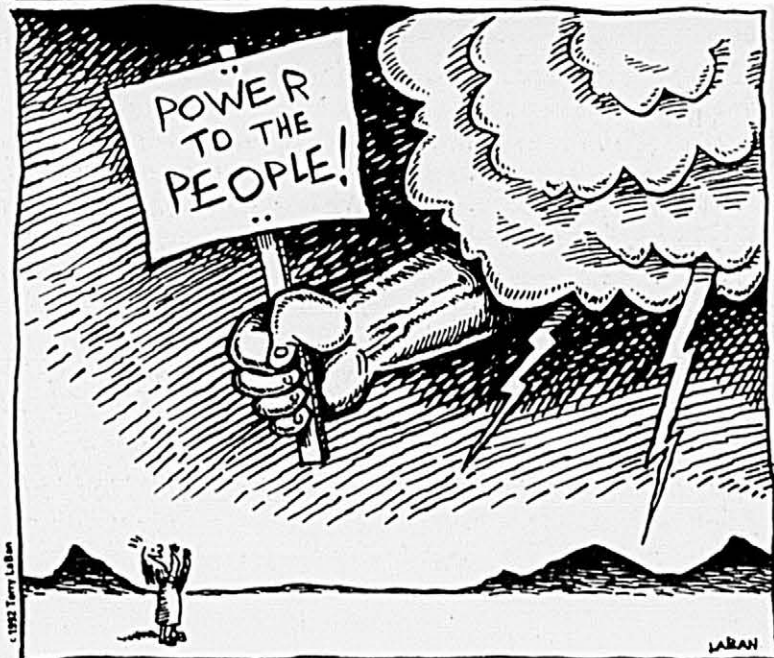
Starve us and we will return to our roots and berries, seal our wells and we will sip the dew, raze our homes and live in caves.

You have nothing to gain but our hatred, and our hatred can be costly.

We have nothing to loose but our lives, and if these are the lives we were destined to lead, then we offer them gladly.

This message is signed by every Palestinian in the occupied territories, Israel, and the Diaspora. But it is in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that the uprising started and is swelling. It is there that we will gain our freedom or become the victims of the twentieth century's second holocaust, because nothing short of our rights will satisfy us, and nothing short of our genocide will stop us..

- extracts from "Palestinians Then & Now" by Hassen Ali compiled by the Palestinian Solidarity Committee. For contact, call Yousef at 935-6446



Evidence suggests African prescence in the Tracing the steps of an

Despite the overwhelming existing evidence, the pre-Colombian presence of Black people in the Americas has remained unknown, deliberately ignored or misunderstood by most academia. This despite the fact that research in this area has been carried out for a number of years.

Ivan Van Sertima is an anthropologist and linguist. He is the author of *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*, as well as the editor of the *Journal of African Civilizations*—a series of books which serve to illustrate the history and culture of Africa and its people, both ancient and modern.

The research itself has been dismissed as "pseudo-scientific" or "pseudo-archaeology," in an attempt to discredit both the research being done and the researchers.

What is the evidence and why has it been so shrewdly overlooked?

Father Roman, one of the earliest explorers of the Americas, recorded the presence of a group of black men on the south of Hispaniola — present-day Haiti and the

Dominican Republic. These Black people were called the Guanins. Father Roman suggested that these men were the same men that Balboa also witnessed at the Darien Isthmus (Panama) in 1513.

It is during the reign of these Nubian kings — the likes of Piankhy, Shabaka, and Taharka — that these colossal stone heads appeared in Mexico. The so-called boxer or football helmet donned by the Olmecs are the same helmets that were worn by the Egyptian military of this time.

Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci wrote of encounters with black people in the Americas long before the advent of the slave trade. Columbus said he encountered natives who spoke of Africans who traded in what the natives called "guanin," a gold, silver and copper alloy. Vespucci, as he approached the shores of America, on his own account witnessed the same Black men making their way back to Africa.

The word guanin, which the natives used to describe the Black men they traded with, has been traced to the Mande languages in West Africa. It has precisely the same meaning in these languages and thus serves as just part of the evidence for the pre-Colombian presence of Africans in the Americas.

An abundance of evidence

As Howard Lawrence points out, "that Africans voyaged across the Atlantic before the era of Columbus is no recent belief... We can now positively state that the Mandingoes of the Mali and Songhay Empires, and possibly other Africans crossed the Atlantic to

carry on trade with the Western Hemisphere Indians, and further succeeded in establishing colonies throughout the Americas."

The African scholar Al Omar in his book *The Masalik al Absan in 1492* speaks of mariners crossing the Atlantic to the Americas during the reign of Abubakari II of the Empire of Mali. In the tenth chapter he recounts a conversation between the successor of Abubakari II, Kankan Musa and Amin Hajib of Egypt. Kankan Musa was credited with bringing so much gold with him on his pilgrimage to Mecca that he devalued the international price of gold for years.

Kankan tells Amin "The monarch who preceded me could not believe it was impossible to discover the limits of the neighbouring sea. He equipped 2000 ships, filled them with enough gold, water and goods for two years, and said to his commanders 'Do not return until you have reached the end of the ocean or when you have exhausted your food and water.'

"Finally, after a long absence, a single ship returned. The captain stated that 'We sailed for a long time, up to the moment we encountered a mid-ocean something like a violent current. My ship was lost, the others sailed on and gradually as each of them entered the place they disappeared...' Abubakari II refused to believe his captain," said Kankan.

"He equipped 2000 vessels—a thousand for himself and a thousand for water supplies. He conferred power to me, and left with his companions and this was the last I saw him and the others, and I remained absolute master of the empire."

To the Americas and back

Recent evidence suggests that not only did Abubakari and his expeditors succeed in crossing the Atlantic, but they also returned to Mali.

Fred Case, a professor in the African Studies Department at the University of Toronto, has recently been working with a UNESCO sponsored team of archaeologists in present day Mali.

Based on the defecation of inhabitants from centuries earlier it has been determined that these people had been eating vegetation which was not indigenous to Africa but actually from the Americas. This food agitated their stomachs thus leaving their feces preserved for analysis.

As for the ocean current mentioned by the returned captain, it well known that virtually anything that gets caught in the ocean currents near the Cape Verde Islands, once entrapped, will find its way to the coast of the Americas.



Black negroid dynasts in ancient Mexico

Both Columbus and his brother are known to have recieved this information years before they actually sailed to the Americas, as they sailed up and down the Guinea Coast of Africa.

Thor Heyerdahl, a Norwegian explorer sailed successfully from Safi, Morocco to Barbados in 1969 with only a papyrus boat modelled after those used by the Ancient Egyptians of the Nile. He did this without the use of oars or motors. He simply let the wind and ocean current guide him along.

In 1952 Alain Bombard rode a raft boat from North Africa to Barbados without any food or water. He used only a small net for sea fauna, a fishing line with hook for tuna, and two spears — a small one for sea perch and a larger one for bigger fish.

Massive stone heads

Massive stone heads of Africans have been found in Mexico. The first of these

stone heads reported outside of Mexico was found in 1865. Called *cabeza colossal* by Mexicans, its Ethiopian (here meaning African) features have been noted by travellers to that region. The head dons a helmet which resembles a football helmet of old.

In 1938 Dr. Mathew Stirling, director of the Bureau of Ethnology, a branch of the Smithsonian Institute, on a joint sponsored expedition with the National Geographic, excavated a 6 foot tall, 18 feet in circumference stone head. One member of the Stirling Institute - noting the head's African facial features and the boxer-like helmet on its head - nicknamed the head "Joe Louis" after the famous African-American boxing champion.

In 1939 the team moved to La Venta, a Island off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. A expedition from Tulane had seen the top of a stone head here in 1925, but did not have the time to excavate it. While searching for this one head the Stirling Institute managed to find five heads — all very African in appearance.

the Americas 800 BC

ancient travelers

by
Dave Austin



The Tres Zapotes stone head; the face, side and back all indicate Africoid features. Note the Ethiopian-type braids at right.

pearance - one head having a circumference of 22 feet — and each weighing 20 tons or more.

Known as the Olmecs, numerous other stone heads have been found since of Africans. These statues are all intricately detailed up to teeth and eyelashes. One rarely seen head has dreadlocks — a hairstyle worn by Black men and women. One is even depicted with buck-teeth! This suggests that the heads were stylized after particular individuals.

Cultural and linguistic evidence

In 1914 Leo Weiner, a Harvard philologist, published his trilogy *Africa and the Discovery of the Americas*. Weiner presents both cultural and linguistic evidence to illustrate the pre-Columbian presence of Africans in the Americas.

Writes Weiner: "The presence of Negroes with their trading masters in America before Columbus is proved, by the representation of Negroes in America sculpture and design, by the occurrence of a black nation at Darien early in the XVI century, but more specifically by Columbus' emphatic reference to Negro traders from Guinea, who trafficked in a gold alloy, guanin, of precisely the same composition and bearing the same name, as frequently referred to by early writers in Africa..."

Weiner also mentions as an example, the presence of the African merchant, the tangoman (Malinke) pronounced tiangizman in Mexico and the "universality of the blue and white shell-money from Canada to La Plata, and the use of shells in the Peru-Guatemala trade."

Unfortunately Weiner, like many other "africanists" is unable to escape the type of ethnocentrism that is all too prevalent when dealing with Africa and its people.

Weiner speaks of the presence of Africans in America "with trading masters," implying that the only way that African could have made their way to the Americas is under the tutelage of another group of people.

This is despite an overwhelming lack of evidence of any other group of people in the Americas at that time (there is evidence

suggesting semitic peoples were in America at an early date).

Medieval Malians needed no masters. During the reign of Abubakari II, Mali was 1700 kilometres wide from the Atlantic to the bend of the Niger River, and 1200 kilometres long from the Sahel to Fouta Djallon, including 400 towns. Its roads were safe, agriculture as well as rock salt, copper and gold trade insured the prosperity of the Empire. Some of Mali's trade goods reached as far as Europe.

Most of the Malian kings were Muslims out of convenience, as it permitted fluid trade among the arab populations to the north and east. However the majority of the population either maintained their indigenous religions or managed to coalesce the two. Thus Weiner's search for a master for these Africans are unfounded.

Visits from Egypt

Of all the proponents of the idea of a pre-Columbian African presence in the Americas, Ivan Van Sertima is the leading figure. A professor of linguistics, anthropology, and African Studies at Rutgers University and a member of the UNESCO team for redrafting world history, Van Sertima has, over the past years, been researching meticulously the evidence of the African Presence in the Americas.

He presents anthropological, archaeological, linguistic, and botanical evidence, as well as eyewitness accounts. His research indicates that pharaonic Egyptians sailed to the Americas at approximately 800 BCE.

For those to whom this sounds preposterous, it should be noted that the Egyptians and Phoenicians of this era made frequent trips across the North Atlantic to the British Isles in search of tin. They left remnants of their culture and influence among the Celts.

At approximately 800 BCE, Nubian kings were the rulers of Egypt. These black kings restored the ancient Egyptian tradition which had lapsed as a result of a series of invasions and the deviations of monarchy.

It is during the reign of these Nubian kings — the likes of Piankhy, Shabaqa, and

Taharka — that these colossal stone heads appeared in Mexico. The so-called boxer or football helmet donned by the Olmecs are the same helmets that were worn by the Egyptian military of this time.

Van Sertima also asserts that the pyramid style found in Mexico and Peru at this time are commonplace in Egypt at this time. Prior to this, there is no semblance of a pyramid the Americas that would indicate a gradual development from a basic to a more complex form of pyramid. Unless we are to believe Von Daniken who postulates that aliens from outer-space built these pyramids, the evidence points to a Nubian presence in the Americas.

Van Sertima also presents botanical evidence, tracing the African origin of the banana, the bottle gourd, and possibly tobacco in the Americas. He presents linguistic evidence which shows ties between some indigenous American languages and Malinke, which coincides with the reports of Africans from Mali crossing the Atlantic to America.

A fusion of cultures

However, Van Sertima does not assert that Africans came to America and civilized the natives of America. On the contrary he speaks of a fusion of elements of both cultures at an early date. This point is often overlooked by his critics.

At a recent presentation-debate at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, Van Sertima laid the question to rest once and for all. His adversary from Harvard, overwhelmed with the unprecedented evidence, babbled for minutes before making his presentation.

For years, it has been wrongfully assumed that Africa waited in darkness for Europe to bring light to the "Dark Continent." But this is hardly the case.

It was the Moors from Africa, a combination of Africans and some Arabs from North Africa that brought light to Europe when Europe sank to the depths of its Dark Ages. The Moors conquered Spain in 711 A.D. and reintroduced science and mathematics to Europe at a time when mathematics was

considered witchcraft and those who practiced it were persecuted.

The Moors introduced a number of universities (17) and centres of learning. They introduced libraries and public baths when it was common European royalty to brag of bathing once a year.

When the last of the Moors were expelled during the Spanish Inquisition of 1492, it signaled a new dark period in world history. The libraries and schools developed by the Moors were destroyed, and priceless and irreplaceable books and manuscripts were burned. Columbus set sail for the Americas with some Moorish navigators and the technology that had been brought and nurtured by the Moors in Europe over an 800 year period.

When Columbus arrived in the Americas he murdered countless natives and, along with Bartholemew de Las Casas, precipitated and endorsed the slave-trade and murder of millions of Africans.

Van Sertima's research goes beyond its value as sound research and historical accuracy. It pricks the consciousness of those who have believed that we Africans waited in jungles, or swung in trees waiting to be civilized. (Ironically, Tarzan, the white lord of the jungle is the only jungle-living tree swinger we know.)

He paints a new image of Africa which for years has been tainted with insidious racism and prejudice — racism designed to render African people inferior in order to justify Western domination and conquest.

Re-researching, re-evaluating, and re-interpreting, then the re-writing the history of Africa is but the first step in solving some the social ills and political-economic afflictions that Black people's face the world over and Van Sertima's contribution is of the highest value.

Dr. Van Sertima will be lecturing on *The African Presence in Early America* tomorrow, 19h, Leacock 132. Tickets are \$5 McGill, \$7 other.

Ironically, Tarzan, the white lord of the jungle is the only jungle-living tree swinger we know.

The South Asian Women's Centre, located at 3600 Hotel de Ville, was set up to fulfill the needs of South Asian women in Montréal.

The Daily spoke with two women from the centre about their goals and their frustrations working at the centre. Dolores Chew is a founding member and current President of the centre. Veena Gujrathi is another member. She has worked on many other community projects in Montréal.

Both women emigrated to Canada from India and can be reached either through the centre or the McGill Centre for Developing Area Studies.

Chew did most of the talking in this interview, but Gujrathi contributed valuable insight which helped to put things into perspective.

Daily: What was the motive behind organizing the centre?

Chew: We started in 1981 because a few of us felt the need for a centre for South Asian women. There were cultural groups for South Asians and there was the Women's centre in Montréal, but some of us volunteering at these places found there were crucial problems of language that kept women from benefitting from existing services.

South Asian women who came to the shelters often could not communicate in English or in French. By servicing these immediate needs, we thought we would be able to find out what other social issues we could deal with.

Of course we had family violence in mind, but we also wanted to see what women themselves said. So we targeted one particular mountain side area where a lot of

Gujratis were living. A few of us went knocking on doors and all the women said they wanted to learn English. Husbands often said the same thing. We decided to set up classes try to get women out of their homes, because that was another problem women mentioned. The inability to communicate led to isolation.

In 1981, the idea of an actual centre was there, but we didn't have any physical space. We met in people's apartments until 1983, when we were given a couple of rooms at



South Asian Women's Centre

— a refuge for immigrant women

BY MRIDU CHANDRA

a government-funded mainstream social service centre. In 1985, we moved to the space we now occupy on Hotel de Ville.

The way we tend to work when we counsel people is not to dictate what people should do, but to set before them various options. We try to reinforce the notion that they have their own strength.

Often people who come to the centre are quite confused because family members have told them one thing, friends have said another, and they really don't know what to do. There are cases in which a woman has decided to leave home, and we had gone to help her pack, only to have the husband open the door and say there is no problem. We have to accept these things, and not take them personally, because maybe the time was not right.

But many women don't go back to their parents, even if they do leave their husbands, because they know that whatever else happens, life is much freer here. They will still have some form of independence. No one will tell them what to do. We can see the changes from when they first came to us, and we can see them blossoming into their own identity.

Who provides the funding for these activities?

The way we tend to work when we counsel people is not to dictate what people should do, but to set before them various options. We try to reinforce the notion that they have their own strength

Various government organizations — the Federal government, Multiculturalism, the Secretary of State, the Québec Ministry of Cultural Communications with immigrants.

Funding has always dogged us, and it will probably get worse. We are currently facing the need to develop alternatives and to create our own fundraising. Getting

money from the government is a sort of catch-22 because it delineates what will be funded. We have to tailor-make the grant proposals, which is very time consuming. We try to be autonomous but government funding does restrict our work, and it is a serious problem for us — especially because the wages grants give are minimum wages and people work very hard to be paid very little.

Moreover, now the federal government is giving its money directly to the Québec government. So although there is more money generally, there is a narrower base for us to work with.

What are the most pressing problems that face South Asian women today?

Economic problems, compounded by language difficulties, are what we face most. Many South Asian women may not know either English or French. Often those who have learned a western language know only English.

We try to help this by offering free English classes and French classes. The government funds the French classes, but funds none of the English classes. We offer babysitting for the women who come to the classes, and we always have more children than volunteers can handle.

New immigrants and refugees come to our job search workshops where we discuss how to look for a job and how to present yourself at an interview. One government grant in particular, the Job Development Grant, is designed to reintegrate women into the work force after they have been home taking care of the children or have recently arrived in the country and don't have the quota for Canadian experience.

Who are the women who come to the center and how do they find out about your services?

When we first started, we did a lot of outreach. We would go to community events and put up a little table and flyers describing our work and the centre. Now we don't do so much of that, simply because we're kind of known — known enough. We still poster grocery stores and announcing classes.

We also have potluck lunches once a month. They're meant to get women out to meet other people. We combine the lunches with either a film or an information section on nutrition or art or different things.

South Asian immigrants come to us to get involved, or with all kinds of problems. They have marital problems or are unhappy with their arranged marriages. Sometimes they are the victims of violence.

When a new bride comes to Canada and finds her husband is already married, or has a relationship, she has no idea what to do. She doesn't want to go home to India because it would be a problem for her family.

We do get women with serious problems, and I don't want to downplay that, but aside from this there are a lot of other things we do.

What is gender specific about the issues the centre deals with — aren't the same needs felt by men?

I think we felt that in our initial contact that it was the women who were unable to participate in the wider community maybe because they came as wives, stayed at home, and looked after children.

Men are forced into the work environment and have contact with the outside world but the women are shut in. Even if the men did not speak the language when they came,

they had to learn, whereas the women were still enclosed.

Women more than men tend to see themselves as part of families and part of communities — and this attitude frames their problems because when there are problems they have more difficulties detaching themselves.

We do have men who come to the center. They aren't turned away. Men can become associate mem-

Women more than men tend to see themselves as part of families and part of communities — and this attitude frames their problems because when there are problems they have more difficulties detaching themselves.

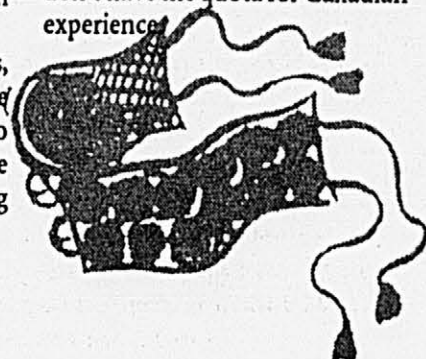
bers. They can't vote and they can't stand for office but all our activities are open to men.

Do you find that the Indian community is supportive of your efforts?

I think so. In the beginning, people were still not very sure about us because the wider Asian community felt that we were feminists and were going to break up homes. There was a lot of disinformation and propaganda about the centre.

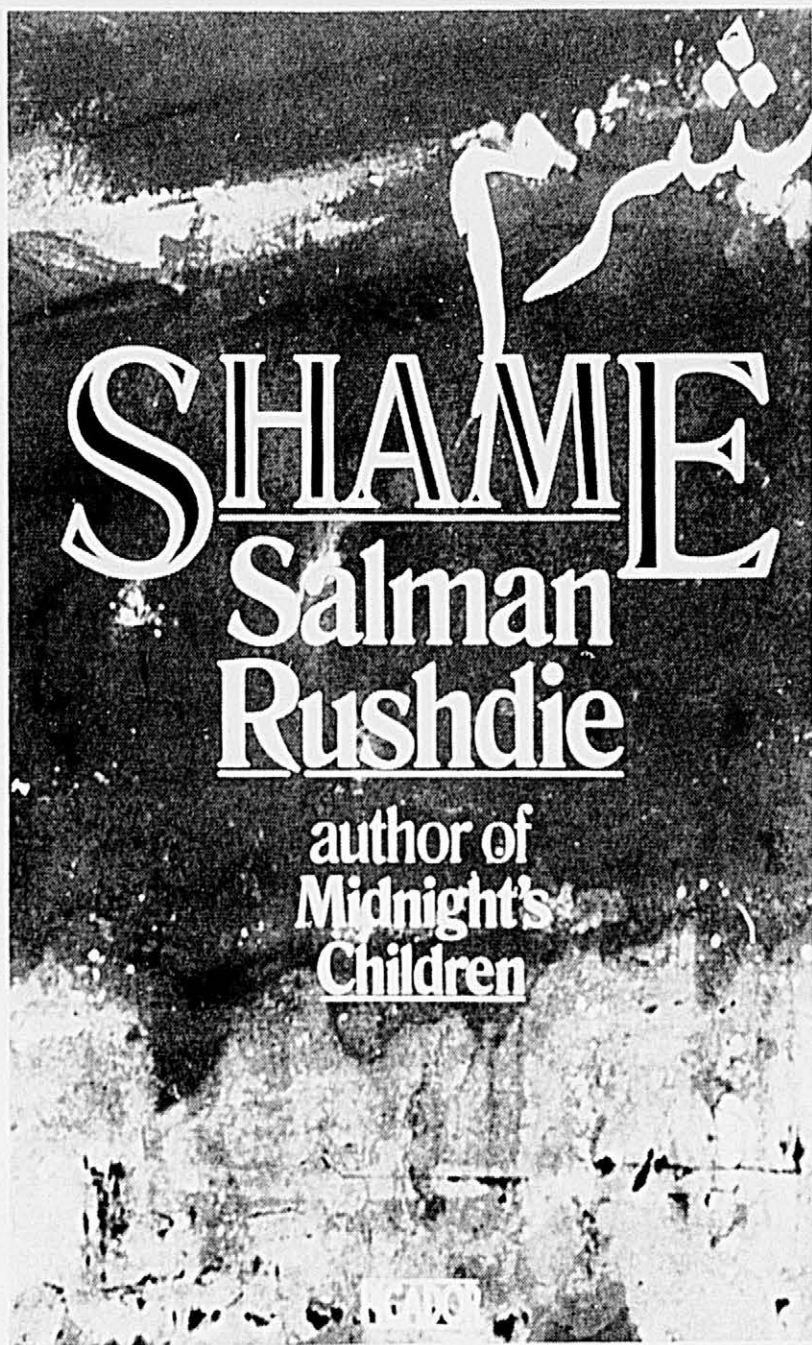
It was intimidating, because even women who just wanted to come for classes or to do other things, like to get a translator to go to the doctor with her, had the perception that if they went to the centre, everyone would think they had problems. Also, the fact that we have South Asians working gave these women the idea that everyone would know about their visit. We had to let people know that confidentiality is respected with us.

Now we are known, and although some still consider us radical, they know we are here for them. And we are known in the larger social services network. For example, in the Children's Hospital, if they suspect a child is being abused in some way, they call us. In fact, we often go to the Children's Hospital to do cultural sensitization workshops for professionals.



Rushdie's Got Style

by
Mridu
Chandra



A flamboyant author can write, too

The name Salman Rushdie conjures up many images — most based on the uproar caused by *The Satanic Verses* three years ago. Rushdie's present state of exile is an ironic and poignant result of his writing style.

Rushdie, in his fearlessness and cynicism, has disturbed, angered, delighted and enchanted many people. How many writers are able to delineate, challenge, and dissect our most base and hidden beliefs, showing our faults so accurately, and terrifying us as a consequence?

Rushdie's talent makes him a dangerous man.

With all the hullabaloo over *The Satanic Verses*, we have forgotten how to appreciate and acknowledge the extravagant and imaginative works of one of our most eclectic contemporary writers.

Shame, Rushdie's most successful novel stylistically, portrays a quirky mix of supernatural powers and an Eastern reality.

Rushdie introduces the novel's theme, shame, with the statement "...shame is like everything else; live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture."

Rushdie uses the image of "shame as a liquid, let's say a sweet fizzy tooth-rotting

drink, stored in a vending machine. Push the right button and a cup plops down under a pissing stream of fluid." When people do shameful things, they push the "button," but they refuse to claim the liquid shame they duly deserve. All the unclaimed, unfelt shame is left to be felt by a few.

Meet Sufiya. Sufiya is the physical embodiment of all the unfelt shame in the world. Sufiya's acceptance of this burden and her bafflement at things other people understand put her in mental torment. A beast grows inside her. Eventually she transforms into a white panther.

The dark side of Sufiya's character controls her, and she is capable of anything. Her violent actions are described in physically grotesque and sexually explicit language that leaves no sense unaffected.

In *Shame*, Rushdie fuses realism and fantasy, with fascinating results. Portraying Sufiya's childish mind and her helplessness in the world, Rushdie chronicles her attempt to control her surroundings.

"There is a thing called the world that makes a hollow noise when you knock your knuckles on it or sometimes it's flat and divided up in books. She knows it is

really a picture of a much bigger place called every-where but it isn't a good picture because she can't see herself in it, even with a magnifying glass."

"She puts a much better place into her head, she can see everyone she wants to see here. Omar Shahbanou Bilquis Raza tiny on the tin. She waves down, the little ant family waves back up."

Mocking the readers

Rushdie is a self-conscious author who tries to portray universal themes in his work — corruption of politics, for instance — which could be undermined if he writes specifically, realistically, about actual events in Pakistan's history.

By writing at a "slight angle to reality," he can name his country Pakistan and can describe the politics in this created "Pakistan" without stating that Pakistan is the only setting for political corruption.

Rushdie mocks his readers by calling attention to the devices he uses to express his view of Pakistan's government. Although he uses an entirely allegorical format, it is very obvious what that allegory represents.

If Rushdie wrote an overt attack on Bhutto and Zia, instead of implicitly criticizing them, the readers could easily reject his idea and refuse to see its value. But with the parody written into a "modern fairytale," the readers are less likely to get upset.

Although a reader may not accept the idea that Pakistan's Zia was a corrupt man, the reader doesn't question the possibility of corruption in a fictitious political ruler, but either way, Rushdie has made his point. And Rushdie rubs it in by calling our attention to this indirect form of satire.

Warning about fundamentalism

Protected by this wall of fiction, Rushdie is able to voice his harsh and cynical opinion. The allegories of Raza Hyder to Zia and Isky Harappa to General Bhutto possess the same comic spirit with which Rushdie mocks the Islamic fundamentalism and the savagery of Pakistan.

Hyder replies to an English journalist's question of whether he is a barbaric tyrant:

"It is not barbaric... Why? For three reasons." He raises a finger for each reason and counts them off. "Number one," he explains, "is that, kindly understand, a law in itself is neither barbaric nor not barbaric. What matters is the man who is applying the law. And in this case it is I, Raza Hyder, who am doing it, so of course it will not be barbaric."

"Number two, let me say, sir, that we are not some savages down from the trees, you see? We will not simply order people to stick out their hands, like this, and go fataakh! with a butcher's knife. No, sir. All will be done under the most hygienic conditions, with proper medical supervision...."

"But the third reason is that these are not laws, my dear fellow, which we have

plucked out of the wind. These are the holy words of God, as revealed in sacred texts. Now if they are holy words of God, they cannot also be barbaric. It is not possible. They must be some other thing."

Rushdie warns against Islamic fundamentalism, or any fundamentalism, and rejects the mythologies upon which it is based.

Comparing gravity with belonging

Rushdie declares an element of autobiography in *Shame*. He writes about his sense of dislocation — a result of his being born in India a Muslim, his move to Pakistan after the partition, and his education in England.

He creates the character Bilquis out of his own experiences of migration. Just as Bilquis stood naked after the explosion of her father's theatre, it is the fate of migrants to be stripped of history, and "to stand naked amidst the scorn of strangers."

Rushdie compares gravity with belonging.

"I am comparing gravity with belonging. Both phenomena obviously exist; my feet stay on the ground, and I have never been angrier than I was on the day my father told me he had sold my childhood home in Bombay. But neither is understood."

"We know the force of gravity, but not its origins; and to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles. Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places."

Anti-gravity is a scientific fact, but the concept of anti-belonging is rarely acknowledged. Unlike most writers, Rushdie does not romanticize the East. Instead he creates a mythological, dream-like world, accentuating the complex and often violent nature of his characters. His ability to criticize everyone and anyone lies in his sense of self as an outcast with no ties to any physical space or culture.

Rushdie's pompous declarations are meant to be appreciated as wry wit. He wants to challenge our most ordinary assumptions and beliefs. He wants to scare us.

But hell, he's just an over-educated cynical academic with a prolific hobby, and we are only flattering him if we take him too seriously.

How many writers are able to delineate, challenge, and dissect our most base and hidden beliefs, showing our faults so accurately, and terrifying us as a consequence? Rushdie's talent makes him a dangerous man.

Memories of EuroBabylon

by
B. Penner

"C'est hyper—hyper—hyper jolii!" sighed Nathalie.

Nathalie and I were standing at the end of Main Street, U.S.A., Marne-la-Vallée, France. We were looking down Main Street at the Chateau de la Belle au Bois Dormant, a pink—and—gold version of Sleeping Beauty's Castle in Orlando. Even Nathalie was impressed. How the roof glittered in the sun! "Do you think that it's made of real gold?" she asked me.

This was Nathalie's first time at a Disneyland. This was my first time at EuroDisney. It seemed ironic to me that just a month before I had been in the Loire Valley, visiting the Chateau d'Usse, Charles Perrault's original inspiration for Sleeping Beauty. Usse is a true fairy tale castle—I asked Nathalie if she had ever heard of it.

"Où?" she asked.

EuroDisney was not officially open at the time of our visit. Nathalie de Lavergnolle and I had come on a preview day for the employees of Nestle and Esso (both major park sponsors). The parking lot was full of tour buses and cars, and we heard Italian, German, English, Spanish and French being spoken among the crowd. There were 45 000 people at the park that day. It seemed that everyone who had been given an invitation had come, all drawn by one thing: curiosity. Everyone wanted to see what all the fuss was about.

In a country that loves to make a fuss, few events—except perhaps the Revolution and Maastricht—had caused such furor in France as EuroDisney's opening. Proclaimed a "Cultural Chernobyl", the coming of EuroDisney was often described as if it meant the end of France itself.

Indeed, at one—fifth the size of

Paris, with ambitious plans for expansion and 14 000 employees, EuroDisney seemed a sinister concept. The French government's official endorsement of the park seemed to confirm what many had suspected for years—the French were completely seduced by the American way of life (as if their love of Levis, McDonald's and MacGyver wasn't proof enough). They didn't love Americans themselves—"too fat and loud" one girl told me—but they did love their culture.

Could Asterisk, foie gras and Beaujolais survive Mickey, hamburgers and Coca-Cola?

As I watched Nathalie gazing in wonderment at the birthday—cake vision before us, I had my doubts. How could Usse's crumbling charms compete with the confectionery design of a Disney "Imagineer"? But I was also curious. Disney was the ultimate American fantasy—a symbol of America as evocative as apple pie or baseball, and about as subtle as the Golden Arches themselves. Could Disney cast its spell on typical French teenager?

I turned back to watch the spectacle along Main Street, U.S.A. There were popcorn vendors, horse—drawn carriages, Barber Shop Quartets, balloons, three of the Seven Dwarves (Dopey, Sneezy and Grumpy) and many smiling costumed cast members scurrying about. The moment you dropped something, it was swept up and out

of sight. Dirt has no place in EuroDisney.

Following our Disney maps, Nathalie and I walked down Main Street, past an ice cream parlour, a bakery, a deli, a hot dog stand, a pizza parlour and countless souvenir shops, and entered Frontierland. "C'est vraiment extraordinaire!" cried Nathalie.

She was staring at Big Thunder Mountain, rising out of an artificial (and less polluted) version of the

Mississippi, criss—crossed by railroad tracks. She ran over to join the queue.

"It's pretty long," I warned.

"Non, non," she said, shaking her head.

An hour and a half later, Nathalie was sulking. We still hadn't reached the end of the queue, although we could now at least see it. She kept saying, in a puzzled voice, "Who would have thought it was this long?"

Disney is the master of the deceptive queue—the "imagineers" can design it and curl it around in such a way that nobody can tell where they are and how much longer it will take them to get where they're going. As well, just to ensure that you wait it out, they make sure you are able to see people whipping by on the rides, screaming with enjoyment. Although this seems normal for any veteran Disneyworld visitor, Nathalie wasn't prepared for this trick—it struck her as dishonest.

But her faith in Disney was restored once our turn came and we went whipping around the mountain, screaming (extra loud to torture those still in line). She even suggested going back a second time, but we ended up going to a Texan café for authentic "grub" instead. The ribs stuck to the insides of our stomach and the fries still had skins on them—just the way ribs and fries ought to be. Nathalie thoroughly enjoyed the food but was somewhat disturbed by the appearance of ice cubes in her Coke.

"C'est quoi ça?" she asked, poking at them suspiciously.

The rest of the day was a blur of activity. We went to Adventureland, Fantasyland and Futureland. In Futureland, we rode the Star Wars

simulators and then went to see Michael Jackson's 3—D Captain Eo movie. Nathalie, although she didn't understand a word of the movie (it was in English), was blown away. She's a big Michael Jackson fan.

Finally, at the end of the evening, we returned to Frontierland and rode on the Mark Twain, a big white steamboat, down the artificial Mississippi. The street lamps pushed back the dark and their glow melted the edges off the unreality of the setting. It almost seemed like we were in midwestern U.S.A., and I had to remind myself—me, a cynical Disney veteran—that we were only 40 minutes away from the heart of Paris.

I asked Nathalie what she was thinking about the whole experience. She thought about it for a moment.

"It's very American," she said. "I didn't think it would be that American. But," she added, hitching up her Levis, "it is very fun. I think that it will be a success."

Now, six months later, EuroDisney is floundering and Nathalie's prediction has been proven wrong. Everybody wants to know what went wrong—how EuroDisney could possibly not succeed. Perhaps the only problem is that Disney, as major exporters of the American dream, overestimated its European appeal. Maybe Europeans have yet to understand the joys of shelling out 250 francs (\$50.00) for the privilege of spending a day in America's #1 amusement park. Until this happens, I think Asterisk is pretty safe.

However, that night as we went home to watch Hart—to—Hart and KnightRyder reruns, Nathalie and I both felt we'd glimpsed the wave of the future—and it was American.

God, peace and democracy in El Salvador

BY HUGO DE BURGOS AND HARI VARIANTZAS

El Salvador, unlike Canada, has an official religion. Since the foundation of El Salvador by the Spaniard Pedro de Alvarado around 1538, the country has been traditionally a Catholic nation.

Nowadays the great majority of Salvadoreans are still Catholic. Given this cultural fact, religious ideology and its psycho-iconic symbolism can't be absent from the everyday reality of Salvadoreans. For many the politics of peace are fairly close to the politics of heaven.

"Nothing that happens on earth is the exclusive responsibility of God," said Ramiro De La Ceiba. "We are all equally responsible as well. However, God can help us."

De La Ceiba was a participant in this year's parade of "El divino Salvador del Mundo" (The Divine Saviour of the World). During this annual event, hundreds of people (women, men and children) take over some of the busiest streets of San Salvador to fervently participate in this Catholic procession.

Although this celebration has taken place every year since it formally began early in this century, it was cancelled in 1980 for the first time as an act of protest

against the assassination of San Salvador's archbishop, Oscar Arnulfo Romero.

After 12 years of civil war and a long history of military repression, the Salvadorean people have developed an almost instinctual capacity for political analysis. In such a highly politicized society it is not surprising that even religious events are imbedded with political content.

Many of the participants we interviewed expressed what this type of celebration meant to them and why it was so important. Most their political views in relation to the religious significance of the parade.

For the adults it was a significant religious ceremony as well as a great opportunity to pray for peace and democracy for their nation.

"We have come to this celebration to ask God to illuminate the minds and the hearts of the people involved in the negotiation of the Peace Process in our country," said Manuel de Cuscatlan, who came to the procession with his wife and their 5 year-old daughter.

For some young people the parade was simply a fun thing to do. But in general everybody showed special interest in taking this opportunity to express their desire for peace and democracy in a land of war and destruction, but at the same time one of hope and reconstruction.

Believe this...

Professor Phillippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario claims that Orientals are smarter than Occidentals. Professor David Suzuki (genetically Oriental) says that Professor Rushton (genetically Occidental) is wrong. Logic demands that Professor Rushton admit that Professor Suzuki is smarter, and therefore right.

End of Debate.

—reprinted from *Montreal Serai* vol. 6 no. 3



In the winter of 1991, President George Bush, along with his diplomatic attaché, Lee Ioaccoca, paid Japan a state visit. Their agenda—to discuss trade (cars perhaps?). At a dinner given in his honour, Mr. Bush shocked the assembled dignitaries with his surprising projectile vomit. The result—the creation of a new Japanese verb. Yes that's right—the Japanese now have a verb that describes a person leaning over and puking under a table—it's to "bushu suru". It's a fact.

Fragmented Identities

BY PARAMITA BANERJEE

Everyone wants a home. Everyone wants to belong. Home provides people with a sense of belonging and an identity.

I have often wondered if I have a home in Canada. I came to Canada when I was eleven years old, elated at having arrived in my dreamland of ice cream castles and brand new friends. I remember being so eager to meet Canadians because my image of Canada was of a smiling friendly RCMP officer sitting on his horse, just like the tourist pamphlets my father brought home.

My expectations were shattered when I realized Canadians did not want to befriend me. In my new school I was a social outcast, a "nerd". I learned quickly that Canadians expressed their identity in material ways. A "cool" image was very important in order to fit in.

I had no idea what rock'n roll was or what "hip clothes" were. No one would speak to me at recess. I was alone in the playground.

If people did pay any attention to my presence, it was to give me disapproving glances at my funny hair, face, skin, and clothes. There

was no place to hide, because wherever I went I stood out as a dark blot in a sea of white, with the smell of spices and incense following me everywhere.

I was terrified to speak out in class and in public because of my heavy Nigerian-Indian accent. School work was very easy for me, but I tried not to answer all the questions in class because to be intelligent in my new home was to be alone.

"My identity is fragmented into the different worlds of my Indian parents, my Canadian friends, and my relatives in India"

My world was lost to me. My Indian-Canadian peers laughed at me because they wanted to deny their Indian identity which I could not understand. I was crying to be back in Nigeria where I had friends and felt I belonged. This Canada did not want me, and I did not want to be alone for the rest of my life.

As years passed by, I made friends and Canada gave me my new cultural identity as an "East Indian-Canadian." I have unknowingly adopted many racist attitudes.

I have struggled with my own cultural alienation. Living in Canada has led me to collaborate in a racist society against myself and others. This destroys a person's sense of self and her integrity.

I have come to realize what I am: a migrant. My identity is fragmented into the different worlds of my Indian parents, my Canadian friends, and my relatives in India. I am constantly fighting to keep myself together as a whole. I am nowhere and somewhere between India, Nigeria, and Canada. Rootless, I defy scientific laws of gravity and time, and societal laws of cultural segregation and history. I depend on my powers of imagination to create my own reality and fantasy.

"As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change." — Salman Rushdie, *Shame*.

On being the different one



EMILY MCCARTHY

Lanterns
in the afternoon
Nikko Shrine

Festival in
Tokyo

BY EMILY MCCARTHY

Japan has always fascinated me. Its ancient culture, its apparently effortless modernization and its rather turbulent modern history.

I admit that reading *Shogun* was the main reason that I ended up in the East Asian Studies Department — I wanted to understand what all those Japanese words in italics meant. Although my reasons for studying Japanese language and culture are somewhat shallow (no, I'm not running away from my own flawed culture), I have learned a lot. I have learned to value other

cultures, and I have been exposed to other ways of living.

Two summers ago, I spent three months in Japan. They were three long months full of dramatic mood swings — from the freedom of being completely incomprehensible to the loneliness of being completely incomprehensible — the classic symptoms of culture shock.

It is the experiences that I had at the crests of these emotional waves that stick in my mind today, and it is these experiences that surface

when others ask me about the time I spent in Japan.

Ironically, one of my most vivid recollections of that summer is of my return, the day I landed in San Francisco. Big, beautiful San Fran, an icon of west coast pop culture. It was crass, dirty, noisy and crowded like any other big city, with one big exception — everything was in English.

I wandered around the downtown area by myself talking to whoever would listen. Words poured out of my mouth almost

Caribbean Land

You know I have not deserted you
I will be back someday
To dance and sing as I used to do
When I was very young

You are the earth
Of my flesh
Your rivers run through my veins
The Caribbean Sun and Sea
I long to touch and kiss those lands again

Caribbean Land I will come back
Please wait for me
Never forget though I am far away
And it had to be this way
You are my mother's soil

I've travelled through the other lands
Though beautiful they were too
They do not compare to the
Love I have for you

Caribbean Sun and Rain
Stars and Moon
Soil and Sea
Fruits and Trees
I am coming back to you some day
I jump with you in music and one love

Power to the Black Children

CALLING ALL BLACK KIDS
COME IN ALL BLACK KIDS
COME IN LEADERS OF TOMORROW
DO YOU READ ME

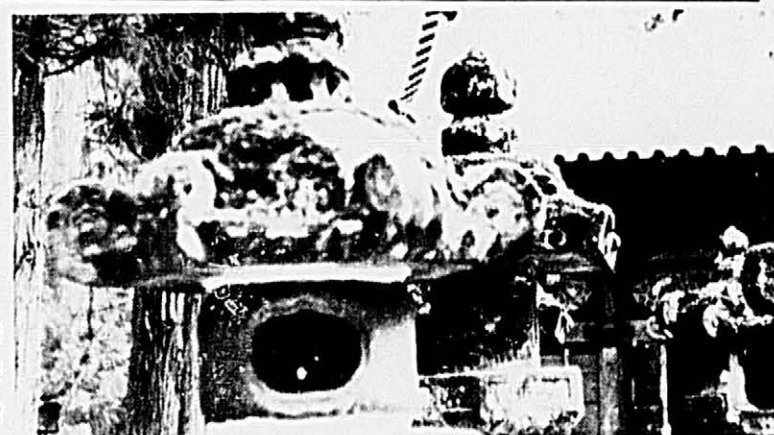
COME IN

Power to our black kids
Because in their bloods
Knowledge is taking shape
They hold the torch for freedom
For this race

They will free us from all
Dependence of our past
They will put us in the
Running Race, like the thorough bred
nurtured for the day, to flaunt its speed

Blackman tomorrow is coming
Are you ready, are you training
The young to run and to lead
For under the black skin
Flows blood of gold dreams
There is a Klondike in the
Black woman's vein

Look to the youth
They hold the key to free the
black man
Of past bondages,
Africa will one day be free of
tears
Because our youths will free us
Power to the black children



involuntarily. I talked and talked until I had worn my vocal cords out and bored half the city.

I thought about how I could relate my experiences in Japan to this year's Culturefest theme: Global Rhythms. It took some time, but I finally realized that when asked that inevitable question "Hey, how was Japan?" (in 500 words or less please 'cause I'm not really all that interested...) the first thing that comes to mind is how hard it was to be a "visible minority".

How the eyes of everyone in a train car would automatically shift away when I lifted my eyes out of a book to look around. The shouts of children when I walked down side streets: "gaijin, gaijin!" (foreigner). The attention was rarely impolite, but it was ever present. I would be asked to be in children's photos like I was a movie star or an escaped circus act.

I suppose it was a continually reinforced sense of difference that I remember most clearly — the constant sense of being on stage. The first thing that people would notice about me was that I was not Japanese. My size, my hair, my language and my skin colour. Never before had I been part of a minority.

Living in Canada was easy for me. The language spoken was my language. The predominant culture was my middle-class white anglo culture. People in Canada conform to me. Here, I am what others differ from.

I found it hard to be the different one. Hard to be constantly seen for what I was not.

I guess I learned something pretty valuable that summer — something that I hope I will never forget and something that will make me strive to create a truly multicultural society, not only here in Canada, but everywhere.



CULTURE FEST '92 • SEPT. 28 - OCT. 2

MONDAY SEPT. 28

Cultural Group Exhibits
(Monday-Wednesday)
10am-3pm • Union Building

Art Exhibits
(Monday-Friday)
• Leacock hallway

**Student Delegation
to El Salvador**
Slide presentation
6:30-8pm
• Rm107/8 Union Building

TUESDAY SEPT. 29

Ida Williams
of the Native Friendship Centre
12:30-2:30pm • Leacock 232

Nilambri Ghal
"Writing As a Woman in the
Indian Community"
3-5pm • Leacock 232

Ivan Van Sertima
of the United Nations
"African Presence in Ancient America"
\$5/\$7 DOOR PRIZES
7pm • Leacock 132

THURSDAY OCT. 1

Shikodan International
Karate & Kendo demonstrations
1-2pm • outside Union Building

Benoit Le Blanc
Zydeco, cajun & blues
2:30pm • The Alley

**International Food
Festival**
Live music & cultural dancing
\$8/\$10 (McGill/General)
6pm • Union Ballroom

WEDNESDAY SEPT. 30

Mike Burns
Irish Storyteller
4pm • The Alley

Alfie Roberts
"Black People & and the Quebec-Canada
Cultural Milieu"
7-8:30pm • FDA Auditorium

Dolores Chew
"Cultural Dualism: An Indian Immigrant
Woman's Perspective"
8:30-10pm • FDA Auditorium

FRIDAY OCT. 2

Global Rhythms:
**Free Outdoor
Multicultural Concert**

featuring:

SIKUS

(Latin Folk Rock)

The Swerving Buffoon

(Celtic)

The Swinging Relatives

(skate/reggae)

8pm • lower campus
(in conjunction with McGill Open House)